



ROSE TERRY COOKE.

Josh Crane was a Yankee, born and bred, a farmer on Plainfield Hill, and a specimen. If some strange phrases were grafted on his New England vernacular, it was because for fifteen years of his youth he had followed the sea, and the sea, to return the compliment, thereafter followed him, when by the time he was thirty-five he had laid up enough money to return a thrifty bachelor, and, buying a little farm on Plainfield Hill, settle down to his ideal of life, and become the amusement of part of the village an oracle of the rest.

We boys adored Uncle Josh, for he was always ready to rig our boats, spin us yarns a week long, and fill our pockets with apples red and russet as his own honest face. With the belles of the village Uncle Josh had no such favor; he would wear a pig-tail, in spite of scoff and remonstrance; he would smoke a cutty-pipe; and he did swear like a sailor, from mere habit and forgetfulness, for no man not professedly religious had a diviner instinct of reverence and worship than he; but it was as instinctive in him to swear as it was to breathe, and some of our boldly speculative and law-despising youngsters held that it was no harm in him, any more than "gosh" and "thunder" were in us; for he really meant no more.

However, Uncle Josh did not quite reciprocate the contempt of the other sex; before long he began to make Sunday night visitations at Deacon Stone's, to "brush his hat o' morning," to step spry, and wear a stiff collar and stock, instead of the open tie he had kept, with the pig-tail, long after jacket and tarpaulin had been dismissed the service; so the village directly discovered that Josh Crane was courting the school mistress, "Miss Eunice," who boarded at Deacon Stone's. What Miss Eunice's surname might be I never knew, nor did it much matter; she was the most kindly, timid, and lovable creature that ever tried to reduce a district school into manners and arithmetic; she lives in my memory still, a tall, slight figure, with tender brown eyes, and a sad face, its broad lovely forehead shaded with silky light hair, and her dress always dim-tinted, faded perhaps, but scrupulously neat.

Everybody knew why Miss Eunice looked so meekly sad, and why she was still "Miss Eunice; she had been "disappointed;" she had loved a man better than he loved her, and, therein copying the sweet angels, made a fatal mistake, broke her girl's heart and went to keeping school for a living.

One day Mrs. Stone announced to old Mrs. Ranney (who was a deaf as a post, and therefore very useful, passively, in spreading news confided to her, as this was in the church porch) that "Miss Eunice wan't a going to hev Josh Crane, 'cause he wan't a professor; but she didn't want nobody to tell on't," so everybody did!

It was true that Miss Eunice was a sincerely religious woman, and though Josh Crane's simple, fervent love-making had stirred a thrill within her she had thought quite impossible, still she did not think it was right to marry an irreligious man, and she told him so with a meek firmness that quite broke down poor Uncle Josh, and he went back to his farming with profounder respect than ever for Miss Eunice, and a miserable opinion of himself.

He was a person without guile of any sort; he would have cut off his pig-tail, sold his tobacco keg, tried not to swear for her sake, but he could not pretend to be pious, and he did not.

A year or two afterward, however, when both had got past the shyness of meeting, and had set aside, if not forgotten, the past, there was a revival of religion in Plainfield—no great excitement, but a quiet springing up of "good seed" sown in past generations, it may be—and among the softened hearts and moist eyes were those of Uncle Josh. His mother's prayers had slept in the leaves of his mother's Bible, and now they awake to be answered.

So earnest and honest was he that for a whole week after he had been examined and approved by the church committee as a probationer, he never once thought of Miss Eunice; when, suddenly, as he was reading his Bible and came across the honorable mention of her name by the apostle, he recollected with a sort of shamefaced delight that now perhaps she would have him; so, with no further ceremony than reducing his dusty flax-colored hair to order by means of a pocket-comb, and washing his hands at the pump, away he strode to the school house, where it was Miss Eunice's custom to linger after school till the fire was burnt low enough to "rake up."

Josh looked in at the window as he "brought to," in his own phrase, "along side the school us," and there sat the lady of his love, knitting a blue stocking, with an empty chair most propitiously placed beside her in front of the fire-place. Josh's heart rose up mightily, but he knocked as little a knock as his great knuckles could effect, was bidden in and sat himself down on the chair in a paroxysm of bashfulness, no-wise helped by Miss Eunice's dropped eyes and persistent knitting. So he sat full fifteen minutes, every now and then clearing his throat in a vain attempt to introduce the point, till at length, desperate enough, he made a dash into the middle of things and bubbled over with: "Miss Eunice, I've got religion! I'm sot out for to be a real pious man; can't you feel to have me now?"

What Miss Eunice's little trembling lips answered, I cannot say, but I know it was satisfactory to Josh, for his first

reverent impulse, after he gathered up her low words, was to clasp his hands and say—"Amen," as if somebody had asked a blessing; perhaps he felt that he had received one in Miss Eunice.

When spring came, they were married, and were happy, Yankee fashion, without comment or demonstration, but very happy. Uncle Josh united with the church, and was no disgrace to his profession, save and except in one thing—he would swear! Vainly did deacons, brethren and pastor assail him with pleading eyes; vainly did he himself repent, and strive and watch, "the stump of dagon remained," and was not to be easily uprooted. At length Parson Pitcher, being greatly scandalized at Josh's expletives, used unskillfully in a somewhat excited meeting on church business "for in prayer meetings he never answered any calls to rise, lest habit should get the better of him and shock the very sinners he might exhort)" Parson Pitcher himself made a pastoral call at the farm, and found its master in the garden hoeing corn manfully.

"Good day, Mr. Crane," said the old gentleman.

"Good day, Parson Pitcher, good day! d—d hot day, sir," answered unconsciously Josh.

"Not so hot as hell for swearers!" sternly responded the parson, who, being of a family renowned in New England for no way mincing matters, sometimes verged upon profanity himself, though unawares. Josh threw down his hoe in despair.

"O Lord!" said he, "there it goes again! I swear! the d—d dogs take it! If I don't keep a goin'! O Parson Pitcher, what shall I dew? It swears off itself. I am clean beat trying to head it off, con—no! no! I mean confuse it all! I'm such an old hand at the wheel, sir!"

Luckily for Josh, the parson's risibles were hardly better in hand than his own profanity, and it took him now a long time to pick up his cane, which he had dropped in the current bushes while Josh stood among the corn hills wiping the sweat off his brow, in an abject state of penitence and humility; and as the parson emerged like a full moon from the leafy curtains, he felt more charitably disposed toward Josh than he had done before.

"It is a very bad thing, Mr. Crane," he said; "it scandalizes the church members, and I think you should take measures to break up the habit."

"What upon arth shall I do, sir?" pitiously asked Josh. "It is the d—dest plague! oh! I swan to man I've done it agin'!"

And here, with a long howl, Josh threw himself down in the weeds and kicked out like a half-broken colt, wishing in his soul the earth would hide him, and trying to feel as bad as he ought to, for his honest conscience sturdily refused to convict him in this matter, faithful as it was in less sounding sins.

Nevertheless, he paid another visit to Josh the next week, and found him in a hopeful state.

"I've hit on't now, Parson Pitcher!" said he, we, without waiting for a more usual salutation. "Miss Eunice she helped me, she's a master cretur for invention! I s—sugar! there! that's it! When I'm a goin' to speak quick, I catch up something else that's got the same letter on the bows, and I tell yew! it goes!—r else it's something! Halloo! I see them d—dipper sheep in my corn. Git aout! git aout! you d—dandoleins! git aout!"—here he scrambled away after the stray sheep, just in time for the parson, who had quieted his face and walked in to see Mrs. Crane, when Josh came back, dripping and exclaiming, "Peppergrass! there is the d—drownedest sheep I ever see!"

This new spell of "Miss Eunice's," as Josh always called his wife, worked well while it was new; but the unruled tongue relapsed, and meek Mrs. Crane had grown to look upon it as she would upon a wooden leg, had that been Josh's infirmity—with pity and regret, the purest result of a charity which "endureth long and hopeth all things," eminently her ruling trait.

Everything else went on prosperously; the farm paid well, and Josh laid up money, but never for himself. They had no children, a sore disappointment to both their kindly hearts, but all the poor and orphan little ones in the town seemed to have a special claim on their care and help; nobody ever went away hungry from Josh's door, or unconsoled from Miss Eunice's "keeping-room;" everybody loved them both, and in time people forgot that Josh swore; but he never did; and a keen pain discomfited him whenever he saw a child look up astonished at his oath.

He had been married about ten years when Miss Eunice began to show signs of failing health; she was, after the Yankee custom, somewhat older than her husband, and of too delicate a make to endure the hard life the Connecticut farmers must or do lead. She was pronounced by the Plainfield doctor to have successively "a spine in the back," "a rising of the lungs," and a "gittieral complaint of the lights" (was it catarrh?). Duly she was blistered, plastered and fomented, dosed with Brandreth's pills, mullen root in elder, tansy, burdock, bitter-sweet, catnip and bone-set tears; dried rattlesnake's flesh, and

the powder of a red squirrel shut into a red hot oven living, baked until powderable, and then put through that process in a mortar, and administered fasting.

Dearly beloved, I am not improvising. All these, and sundry other and filthier medicaments, which I refrain from mentioning, did once, perhaps do still, abound in the islands of this Yankeeedom, and slay their thousands yearly, as with the jaw-bone of an ass.

At length Uncle Josh tackled up Boker, the old horse, and set out for Sanbury where there lived a doctor of some eminence, and returned in triumph with Dr. Sawyer following in his own gig.

Miss Eunice was carefully examined by the physician, a pompous but kindly man, who saw at once there was no hope and no help for his fluttering and panting patient.

One morning a sudden pang awoke her, and her start roused Josh; he lifted her on the pillow, where the red morning light showed her gasping and gray with death; he turned all cold.

"Good-by, Josh!" said her tender voice, fainting as it spoke, and with one upward rapturous look of the soft brown eyes, they closed forever and her head fell back on Josh's shoulder, dead.

There the neighbor, who "did chores" for her of late, found the two when she came in. The moment that Mrs. Casey lifted his wife from his arm, and laid her patient, peaceful face back on its pillow, Josh flung himself down beside her, and cried aloud with the passion and carelessness of a child. Nobody could rouse him, nobody could move him, till Parson Pitcher came in, and, taking his hand, raised and led him into the keeping-room. There Josh brushed off the mist before his drenched eyes with the back of his rough hand, and looked straight at Parson Pitcher.

"O Lord! she's dead," said he, as if he alone of all the world knew it.

"Yes, my son, she is dead," solemnly replied the parson. "It is the will of God and you must be content."

"I can't! I can't! I ain't a going to," sobbed Josh—"I ain't no use talkin', if I'd only 'xpected somethin', it's that—doctor! Oh, Lord! I've sworn, and Miss Eunice is dead! Oh gracious goodly! what be I a goin' to do? oh dear, oh dear! oh Miss Eunice!"

Parson Pitcher could not even smile—the poor fellow's grief was too deep. What could he think of to console him but that deepest comfort to the bereaved, her better state? "My dear friend, be comforted! Eunice is with the blessed in heaven!"

"I know it! I know it! she allers was nigh about fit to get there without dyin'! O Lord! she's gone to heaven and I ain't!"

No—there was no consoling Uncle Josh; that touch of nature showed it. He was alone, and refused to be comforted; so Parson Pitcher made a fervent prayer for the living, that unawares merged into thanksgiving for the dead, and went his way, sorrowfully convinced that his body office had in it no supernatural power or aid, and that some things are too deep and too mighty for man.

After this Josh retired to his own house, and, according to Mrs. Casey's story, neither slept nor ate; but this was somewhat apocryphal, and three days after the funeral, Parson Pitcher, bethinking himself to the Crane farm, found Uncle Josh whittling out a set of clothes-pegs on his doo-step, but looking very downcast and miserable.

"Good morning, Mr. Crane," said the good divine.

"Mornin', Parson Pitcher, hev' a cheer!"

The parson sat down on the bench of the stoop, and wistfully surveyed Josh, wondering how best to introduce the subject of his loss; but the refractory widower gave no sign, and at length the parson spoke.

"I hope you begin to be resigned to the will of Providence, my dear Mr. Crane?"

"No, I don't a speak!" honestly retorted Josh.

Parson Pitcher was shocked.

"I hoped to find you in a better frame," said he.

"I can't help it!" exclaimed Josh, flinging down a finished peg emphatically. "I ain't resigned! I want Miss Eunice, I ain't willin' to have her dead, I can't and I ain't, and that's the whole on't! and I'd a—sight rather—oh goody! I've sworn agin, Lord-o-massy; I shan't a've to look at me when I do, and I'm goin' straight to the d—d, Oh land! there it goes! oh dear soul, can't a feller stop himself nohow?"

And with that Josh burst into a passion of tears, and fled past Parson Pitcher into the barn, from whence he emerged no more till the minister's steps were heard crunching on the gravel path toward the gate, when Josh, persistent as Galilee, thrust his head out of the barn window, and repeated in a louder and more strenuous key, "I ain't willin', Parson Pitcher."

II.

There was in the village of Plainfield a certain Miss Ranney, the greatest cixen in those parts, and of course an old maid. Her temper and tongue had kept off suitors in youth, and had no-wise softened since. Her name was Sarah, familiarized into Sally, and she grew up to middle age, that pleasant, kindly title being sadly out of keeping with her nature, everybody called her Sall, Ran., and the third generation scarce knew she had another name.

Any upwar in the village always began with Sall Ran., and woe be to the unlucky boy who pifered an apple under the overhanging trees of Miss Ranney's orchard by the road, or tilted the well-sweep of her stony-curbed well to get a drink; Sall was down upon the offender like a hail-storm, and cuffs and shrieks mingled in the wild chorus with her shrill scolding, to the awe and consternation of every child within half a mile.

lashed." The parson drew a long breath, partly for the mutability of man, partly for wonder.

"Whom are you going to marry, Mr. Crane?" said he, after a pause.

Another man might have softened the style of his wife to be—not Josh.

"Sall Ran," said he, undauntedly.

Parson Pitcher arose from his chair, and with both hands in his pockets advanced upon Josh like horse and foot together; but he stood his ground.

"What, in the name of common sense and decency do you mean by marrying that woman, Joshu-way Crane?" thundered the parson.

"Well, ef you'll set down, Parson Pitcher, I'll tell ye the rights on't; you see I'm dreadfully pestered with this here swearin' way I've got; I kinder thought it'd wear off if Miss Eunice kep' a looking at me, but she's died"—here Josh interpolated a great blubbing sob—"and I'm gottin' to d—d—bad! there! you see, parson, I do swear dread-ful; and I ain't no more resigned to her dyin' than I used to be, and I can't stan' it, so I set figerin' on it, and I guess I've lived too easy, han't had enough 'fictions and trials; so I concluded I hed oughter to put myself to the wind-ard of some squalls so as to learn navigation, and I couldn't tell how, till suddenly I brought to mind Sall Ran, who is the d—d—and all, oh dear! I've nigh about sworn agin, and I concluded she'd be the nearest to a cat-o-nine-tails I could get to tewtor me, and then I relected what old Cap'n Thomas used to say when I was a boy aboard of his whaler: 'Boys,' sez he, 'you're allers sot to hev your way, and you've got to hev mine, so it's pooty clear that I shall hev you to rope-yard, or else you'll hev to make b'lieve my way's yours, which'll suit all round.' So you see, Parson Pitcher, I wan't a goin' to put myself in a way to quarrel with the Lord's will agin, and I don't expect you to hev no such trouble with me twice as you've hev since Miss Eunice up an' died. I swan I'll give up reasonable next time, accein' it's Sall!"

Hardly could Parson Pitcher stand this singular creed of doctrine, or the shrewd and self-satisfied, yet honest, expression of face with which Josh clenched his argument. Professing himself in great haste to study, he promised to publish as well as to marry Josh, and, when his old parishioner was out of hearing, indulged himself with a long fit of laughter, almost inextinguishable, over Josh's patent Christianizer.

Great was the astonishment of the whole congregation on Sunday, when Josh's intentions were given from the pulpit and strangely mixed and hesitating the congratulations he received after his marriage, which took place in the following week. Parson Pitcher took a curious interest in the success of Josh's project, and had to acknowledge its beneficial effects, rather against his will.

Sall Ran was the best of house-keepers, as seeds are apt to be; or is it in reverse that the rule began? She kept the farm-house quarterly clean, and every garment of her husband's scrupulously mended and refreshed; but if the smallest profanity escaped Uncle Josh's lips, he did indeed "hear thunder," and, with the ascetic devotion of a Guyonist, he endured every obnoxious torrent to the end, though his soft and kindly heart would now and then eringe and quiver in the process.

It was all for his good, he often said, and by the time Sall Ran had been in Miss Eunice's place for an equal term of years, Uncle Josh had become so mild-spoken, so kind, so meek, that surely his dead wife must have rejoiced over it in heaven, even as his brethren did on earth.

And now came the crowning honor of his life, Uncle Josh was made a deacon. Sall celebrated the event by a new black silk frock, and asked Parson Pitcher home to tea, as is the great glory of a New England housekeeper. Pies, preserves, cake, biscuit, bread, short-cake, cheese, honey, fruit, and cream were pressed, and pressed again, upon the unlucky parson till he was quite in the condition of Charles Lamb and the omnibus, gladly saw the signal of retreat from the table, he withdrawing himself to the bench on the stoop to breathe the odoriferous June air, and stalk over matters and things with Deacon Josh, while "Mrs. Crane cleared off."

Long and piously the two worthies talked, and at length came a brief pause, broken by Josh.

"Well, Parson Pitcher, that 'ere calkeration of mine about Sall did come out nigh outer right, didn't it?"

"Yes, indeed, my good friend!" returned the parson; "the trial she has been to you has been really blessed, and shows most strikingly the use of discipline in this life."

"Yes," said Josh, "if Miss Eunice had lived, I don't know but what I should 'a been a swearin' man to this day; but Sall, she's rated it out of me; and I'm gettin' real resigned, too."

The meek complacency of the confession still gleamed in Uncle Josh's eyes as he went in to prayers, but Sall Ran looked redder than the crimson peonies on her posy-bed.

Parson Pitcher made an excellent prayer, particularly descending on the use of trials; and when he came to an end and rose to say good-night, Mrs. Crane had vanished, so he had to go home without taking leave of her. Strange to say, during the following year a rumor crept through the village that "Mrs. Deacon Crane" had not been heard to scold once for months; that she even held her tongue under provocation; the last fact being immediately put to test by a few evil-minded and investigating boys, who proceeded to pull her fennel bushes through the pickets, and nip the yellow heads, receiving for their audacious thieving no more than a mild request not to "do that," which actually shamed them into apologizing.

With this confirmation, even Parson Pitcher began to be credulous of report, and sent directly for Deacon Crane to visit him.

"How's your wife, deacon?" said the parson, as soon as Josh was fairly seated in the study.

"Well, Parson Pitcher, she's most on sartainly changed. I don't believe she's

got rthed more'n once, or gin it to me once, for six months."

"Very singular!" said Parson Pitcher. "I am glad for both of you; but what seems to have wrought upon her?"

"Well!" said Uncle Josh, with a clear glitter in his eye, "I expect she must 'a ben to the winder that night you 'n I sot talkin' on the stoop about 'fictions' and her; for next day I stumbled and spilt a lot o' new milk on the kitchen floor, that allers riled her; so I began to say—"Oh, dear, I'm sorry Sall!" when she ups right away, and sez, sez she—"You han't no need to be skeered, Josh Crane; you've done with 'fictions in this world; I shan't never scold you no more I ain't a goin' to be made a pack-horse to carry my husband to heaven!" and she never said no more to me, nor I to her, but she's ben nigh about as pretty behaved as Miss Eunice ever since, and I hope I shan't take to swearin'. I guess I shant, but do feel kinder crawly about being resigned."

However, Uncle Josh's troubles were over. Sall Ran dropped her name for "Annt Sally," and finally joined the church, and was as good in her strenuous way as her husband in his meekness, for there are "diversities of gifts;" and when the Plainfield bell, on that autumn day, tolled a long series of eighty strokes, and Deacon Crane was fathered to his rest in the daisy sprinkled burying-yard beside Miss Eunice, the young minister who succeeded Parson Pitcher had almost as hard a task to console Aunt Sally as his predecessor had to install resignation, on a like occasion, into Uncle Josh.

DINING A THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

The food of the Anglo-Saxon Men of Wealth Was Served in Abundance. A thousand years ago, when the dinner was ready to be served, the first thing brought into the great hall was a table. Movable trestles were brought, on which were placed boards and all were carried away again at the close of the meal. Upon this was laid the tablecloth. There is an old Latin treatise of the eighth century, in which the table says: "I feed people with many kinds of food. First, I am quadruped, and adorned with handsome clothing; then I am robbed of my apparel and lose my legs also."

The food of the Anglo-Saxon was largely bread. The bread was baked in round, flat cakes, which the superstition of the cook marked with a cross, to preserve them from the peils of the fire. Milk, butter and cheese were also eaten. The principal meats were bacon, as the acorns of the oak forests, which then covered a large part of England, supported numerous droves of swine. Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were not only hearty eaters, but also keen drinkers.

The drinking horns were first literally emptied when they had been replaced by a glass cup, it retained a tradition of its rude predecessor in its shape, so that it, too, had to be emptied at a draft. Each guest was furnished with a spoon, while his knife he always carried in his belt; as for forks, who dreamed of their when nature had given man ten fingers? But you will see why a servant with a basin of water and a towel always presented himself to each guest before dinner was served and after it was ended.

Boasted meat was served on the spit or rod on which it was cooked, and the guest cut or tore off a piece to suit himself. Boiled meat was laid on the cakes of bread, or lagr, on thick slices of bread called "trenchers," from a Norman word meaning "to cut," as these were to carve the meat on, thus preserving the table cloth from the knife. At first the trencher was eaten or thrown upon the stone floor for the dogs who crouched at their master's feet. At a later date it was put in a basket and given to the poor who gathered at the manor gate.

During the latter part of the Middle Ages the most conspicuous object on the table was the salted. This was generally of silver, in the form of a ship. It was placed in center of the long table at which the household gathered, my lord and lady, their family and guests, being at one end and their retainers and servants at the other. So one's position in regard to the salt was a test of rank—the gentry sitting "above the salt" and the yeomanry below it.

In the houses of the great nobles dinner was served with much ceremony. At the hour of the procession entered the hall. First came several musicians, followed by the steward bearing his rod of office, and then came a long line of servants carrying different dishes.

Some idea of the variety and profusion may be gained from the provision made by King Henry III. for his household at Christmas, 1254. This included 31 oxen, 100 pigs, 350 fowls, 29 hies, 50 rabbits, 9 pheasants, 56 partridge, 48 woodcock, 39 plovers and 3,000 eggs! Many of our favorite dishes have descended from the Middle Ages. Macaroon have served as a dessert since the day of Chaucer. Our favorite winter breakfast, griddle cake, has come down to us from the faraway Britons of Wae, while the boys have lunched on gherbread and girls on pickles and jels since the time of Edward I., more than 500 years ago.—American Analyst.

"That fellow who brings that \$1,000 painting is just beginning to make a collection," said the art dealer.

"How do you know," said his clerk. "Because he talked about paintings."—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

Not in the Dea Claggett—You are a big-bodded man to be begging on the streets.

Dusty Rhodes—I know; but we can't all be in on this Panat business.—Pack.

One Good Turn Deserves another. Husband—But I don't want to quit chewing tobacco.

Wife—I gave up my wee for you, and I think you may do the same for me.—Kate Field's Washington

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