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Selected Miscellany.

The Trundle-Bed.

As I rummaged through the garret,
List'ning to the falling rain,
As it pattered on the shingles,
And against the window pane,
Peeping over chests and boxes,
Which with dust was thickly spread,
I saw in the farthest corner
What was once my trundle-bed.

And I drew it from the recess
Where it had remained so long,
Hearing all the while the music
Of my mother's voice in song—
As she sung her sweetest accents,
What I since have often read—
"Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed."

As I listened, recollections
That I thought had been forgot
Came with all the gush of memory,
Rushing, thronging to the spot,
As I wandered back to childhood,
To those merry days of yore,
When I knelt beside my mother,
By this bed upon the floor.

Then it was with hands so gently
Placed upon my raven head,
That she taught my lips to utter
Carefully the words she said,
Never can it be forgotten,
Deep are they in memory graven—
"Hallowed be Thy name, O Father!
Father! Thou art in Heaven."

This she taught me then she told me
Of its import great and deep;
After which I learned to utter
"Now I lay me down to sleep."
Then it was with hands uplifted,
And in accents sweet and mild,
That my mother used "Our Father!"
"Father, do Thou bless my child."

Years have passed and that dear mother
Long has mouldered 'neath the sod,
And I trust her united spirit
Revels in the home of God.
But that scene of summer twilight
Never has from memory fled,
And it comes with all its freshness
When I see my trundle-bed.

THE LITTLE CRIPPLE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

It was a bleak, cold morning in December, that two young men followed with the throng hastening along Broadway to their respective places of business.

"Hurry up, Al. Seems to me you are taking your time, and pretty quietly too. What's stopped your tongue for once?" exclaimed one of the young men.

The other, putting his hand with a slight pressure on the arm of his companion looked an instant into his eyes, then directed their gaze by his own to the figure of a woman just in front of them.

Slowly and cautiously she picked her way along the ice-coated pavement.

"Well?" said Al.'s companion in a low tone, inclining his head nearer to catch the answer.

"Do you not see that she is lame?" Dreadfully so. I cannot hurry by her." An expression of deep sympathy was in his eyes.

"Pooh! what have you to do with that? If you undertake to stand guard over all the cripples you may come across, you'll have a busy time of it," said the other, with a contemptuous curl of his lip.

"Hush! For shame, Louis!"

Just at that instant, as she was crossing the curbstones, the lame girl's crutch slipped and she fell forward.

Albert sprang to her side, and raising her, asked anxiously:

"Are you hurt?"

"Only slightly," she said, throwing up her veil and turning her face to answer him.

She was by no means beautiful. Only a thin, pale little face, on which the traces of suffering were plainly visible, was looking into Albert Foster's. Yet never before had any face impressed him as that. His whole nature was filled with sympathy. Turning to her, he said, in an earnest tone:

"You must permit me to accompany you. It is very slippery, and I see you are suffering now."

An impatient expression caught Albert's ear, and turning, he saw his friend waiting near.

The pale face flushed painfully. She raised her eyes imploringly, and said:

"No, no—please go on. I shall do very well after a few moments' rest."

"Excuse me, I cannot leave you," Albert said, taking her hand and placing it within his arm in a manner very decided, but so gentle and respectful that the girl yielded, simply saying:

"I have only a short distance now."

At the entrance of a large establishment, a short distance further on, she stopped. Drawing her hand from his arm, she said:

"I am employed here. You have been very kind. Few would have—"

She hesitated, stopped, raised her eyes filled with tears to his, and with "thank you," in a trembling voice, she turned from him and entered the store.

A few steps further on, Louis Hayden was waiting. As Albert came up, he said:

"I would not make a spectacle of myself by lugging along a dowdy little cripple, if I were you, Al."

"For shame, Louis. How can you talk so? Poor girl. I am truly glad I had the opportunity to assist her. I'm afraid she heard your unkind remarks. I'm sure she did the exclamation at the time I offered my arm," said Albert reproachfully.

"Well, if she did, I think she is used to hearing such. She don't expect to hear remarks about her grace and beauty, I guess."

"There, that will do. We will drop the subject, if you please," said Albert Foster, in a tone that expressed more fully than his words his disgust at his companion's cruel nature.

He remained quiet during the remainder of their walk, at the end of which, with a cold "good-morning," Albert entered his place of business.

"Poor girl! I fear she is more injured than she acknowledged. How weary her life must be! I could have knocked Hayden down for his brutal remarks. I feel now as if I had left a duty unperformed. 'Used to hearing such!' Yes, I fear there are too many like him. I wish I could shield her from the world's harshness," said Albert.

Continually during the forenoon his thoughts returned to the lame girl, with her large mournful eyes raised so imploringly to his. From his inmost heart he pitied her. His thoughts were still with her, when a boy came in, bringing flowers to sell. Albert purchased one of the bouquets, thinking:

"It is not probable any one else will send her flowers. I will. Possibly they will brighten her dreariness a little."

He had paid for them, and the boy was leaving, when Albert remembered the difficulty he might have in getting to one whose name he knew not.

Stepping out, he called the boy back, and asked:

"Do you know any one employed at Hart's?"

"Yes, sir; I'm going there now. I know the porter," answered the youth.

"Ah, that's good. You can get him to deliver this to the young lady who is lame?"

"Oh, yes; I know who you mean!" exclaimed the boy, interrupting him. "Miss Avis—I don't know her other name. Some call her Avie. I'll take it to her with pleasure. I know she don't have flowers often. She will be so glad to have them, to carry home to her sick mother."

"You seem to know considerable about her, Jack."

"Only what I've heard at the store. She takes care of her mother. They were rich once, they say," the youth answered. "Shall I take your card, or say by whom the bouquet was sent?" asked the boy, moving off.

"No, no; certainly not," answered Albert.

"All right, sir," Jack replied, and was soon out of sight.

"Avie!" softly repeating the name, Albert entered the establishment again.

"What an appropriate name! Poor little lame bird, constantly exposed to such cruel blows as Hayden gave her. I've done with him. Oh, if I were only rich, or not quite so poor, I would catch that little bird and keep her in the home nest, where only words of love should reach her ear."

"Flowers for Avie," said a bright, pretty girl, coming into the work room with the little bouquet, and handing it, with a pleasant smile.

"For me? I think there must be some mistake. Who would send me flowers?" said the gentle girl, raising her dark eyes with a pleased yet doubtful look, as if fearful to accept the sweet offering.

"Oh, no; there is no mistake. I heard the boy when he said, 'For Miss Avis.' And I'm just as glad as if they were for me. Here, put your little head down into the flowers, little girl, bird like, and enjoy their perfume," said the bright girl.

Avie bent her head to hide the blush that came with the thought, "Who else could?"

She thought of him all day—of his gentle, earnest manner, as he drew her hand within his arm; his voice; so full of sympathy; his eyes, so clear and truthful when looking into hers, so flashing and indignant when the cruel words of his companion reached his ear. She thought of nothing but him. That evening, as she stepped from the building, supported by two of her young friends, she saw approaching the object of her thoughts. For an instant she raised her eyes to his. She knew then that her heart had directed her truly, and a glad, grateful look thanked and assured him of the knowledge.

Albert had not intended she should see him; he only thought of getting somewhere near, to see if the flowers had reached her.

Raising his hat, he passed on. His thoughts, however, follow the "poor little bird," as he called her. Many girls with brighter eyes and fairer faces passed him unnoticed that evening.

"Yes, he pities me. I know 'tis nothing else," Avis said, as she laid her weary little head on the pillow that night, not to sleep much, but to think of one whose name she knew not. Every word and look of his was recalled; and with a sob an anguish, the poor girl moaned:

"Oh that I were like others. Surrounded with beautiful girls, how could any but thoughts of pity fill his mind for me? I must think of him no more. Love is not for me."

Frequently they met in passing. And again came a gift of flowers, sweet offering, bringing hope to the weary little heart.

"Perhaps—oh, dare I think it?—perhaps he may grow to love me," she said. A glad, hopeful light came in her eyes, but to linger only a few brief moments.

"No, no," she moaned. "No I will not strive to win his noble heart. His wife must not be a burden upon his hert, as well as hands—a helpless cripple!"

The warm blood rushed to her pale brow, as she remembered the cruel words and sneering expression of Louis Hayden.

"No, no, I would never subject him to such mortification. I must fly from the temptation."

Albert met her no more after that. From the flower boy he learnd that she had left Hart's.

Yes, the poor girl, fragile though she was, had a strong, noble heart; and putting aside the joy, she took the bitter part, believing it for his good.

Albert Foster made several efforts, without effect, to find Avis. That pale, patient face, with the great mournful eyes, had made a more lasting impression on his heart than any beautiful one ever had before.

Years passed, and though acknowledging the loveliness of many, he gave to none the place in his heart where the image of the little lame girl had been enshrined so long.

"Come, Foster, I declare it is full time you had yielded your heart to some fair lady. Every one of our Club has his chosen one but you. There is Hayden; hardened as his heart was, it has yielded at last. But I cannot wish him success. She is to pure and lovely for such a man. Come, I wish you would let me introduce you to Miss Temple," said an old chum of Albert's.

"Miss Temple? Is she the lady that Hayden's heart has yield to?" asked Albert, in a rather abstracted manner.

"Yes, Hayden's and a dozen others. Have you never seen or heard of her?"

"Never."

"No, of course not, you confirmed old bachelor. You never give a woman the chance of touching your heart, if you have one. Miss Temple is lovely in ever way. Her uncle, whose heiress she will be, is very rich. They have just returned from Paris, after a sojourn of five years. This young lady is one of the brightest stars in the fashionable firmament, just now. You must really know her, Foster."

Albert, yielding to his friend's persuasion, accompanied him that evening, and was presented to Miss Temple. Louis Hayden was beside her when they entered the room, his eyes riveted on her fair face, his ear drinking in every sound of her low, sweet voice.

"You see how much in love Hayden is. Could you have believed it possible?" said Alberts's friend.

But there came no intimation of Albert having heard one word his companion had spoken. After repeating them again, and meeting with the same result, he laid his hand on his arm, and said:

"What's the matter with you, man? I've been talking to you for five minutes, without your hearing one word, I believe."

"Oh, excuse me. I really have not."

"Well, I declare, I did not expect you would have lost your heart at first sight."

"No, no: 'tis not so. I've been trying to think where I've seen Miss Temple before."

"Here she comes! I don't beleive she cares to have Hayden hanging about her. Let us approach and relieve her from his presence."

"Miss Temple, permit me to present my friend, Mr. Foster?"

A bright smile wreathed the ruby lips of the lovely girl, as, to Albert's great astonishment and delight, instead of the of acknowledgment, the little hand was placed in his, and she said:

"I have met Mr. Foster before."

"Where, O tell me where?" he pleaded, an hour after, when, with her hand resting on his arm, they promenaded and passed Louis Hayden, who sat, with frowning brow, gazing upon them.

"You must find out," she answered, smiling softly.

"Avie," called some one near.

"Avis," repeated Albert, turning quickly, and gazing with a startled, eager expression on her; and then, with a flushed brow, he said:

"Pardon me. That name is so rare a one. I was surprised to hear it again."

"Again?"

"Yes; years ago I knew another bearing it," Albert answered, with the old look of gentle pity in his fine eyes.

"Tell me of her?" Miss Temple said softly.

"There is but little to tell. A gentle dove crossed my path; I would have sough to win and shield her from a careless, cruel world, but she flew from me—"

"Could she fly? Was she not a poor little crippled bird?" asked Miss Temple, in a tone so low that Albert had to bend his ear to catch the words.

"Yes, yes. You knew her? You have the same name. Can it be? No, no. You are a bird of bright and beautiful plumage, and—she—was—"

They were again close beside Louis Hayden.

"A dowdy little cripple, who fell on the ice on a cold, bleak morning, five years ago. Was it not as long, Mr. Hayden?' Miss Temple asked.

"Lost!" exclaimed Hayden, with a low moan, turning away.

"Tell me of her? Albert said, in a low, agitated voice.

"Must I tell you of the gratitude that has never grown less in the heart of that little lame girl?

'No, no. Tell me, where is she?'

'Here,' she answerd, smiling. 'Waiting to be claimed as an old acquaintance.''

'Impossible!' exclaimed Albert, gazing into the bright lovely face, and on the slight graceful figure beside him.

'Nothing is impossible in these days of science and wonderful skill,' she said. 'It was not difficult for my uncle, after finding me, to find also those willing and anxious to attempt a cure. You see the result,' said Avis, placing her hand within Albert's arm, and moving slowly toward where her uncle was standing.

"You know I love you. How madly! Must the rememberence of the idle words of a thoughtless boy condemn me to despair? Forget them. Trust me!' Louis Haydan pleaded.

'I cannot. Can you wonder that a wounded bird should fly from the one who dealt her a cruel blow?'

'Forgive!' he cried.

'I do—believe me. But—'

'You love another—Albert Foster. Ah! I might have known it,' Louis said bitterly.

"I am his promised wife," she said softly—and passed away from his side forever.

Legend of a Musket.

Mark Twain tells the following story related by a fellow passenger, who bantered about his timidity, said he had never been scared since he loaded an old Queen Ann's musket for his father once, whereupon he gave the following:

You see, the old man was trying to learn me to shoot blackbirds and beasts that tore up the young corn and such things, so that I could be of some use about the farm, because I wasn't big enough to do much. My gun was a single-barreled shotgun, and the old man carried an old Queen Ann musket that weighed a ton, made a report like a thunderclap, and kicked like a mule. The old man warned me to shoot the old musket sometimes, but I was afraid. One day, though, I got her down, and so I took her to the hired man, and asked him to load her, because it was out in the field. Hiram said: "Do you see those marks on the stock—an X and a V on each side of the Queen's crown. Well that means ten balls and five slugs—that's her load.''

"But how much powder?''

"Oh," he says, "it don't matter; put in three or four handfuls."

So I loaded her up that way, and it was an awful charge—I had sense enough to see that, and started out. I leveled her on a good many blackbirds; but every time I went to pull the trigger, I shut my eyes and winked. I was afraid of her. Toward sundown I fetched it up to the house, and there was the old man resting on the porch.

'Been out hunting, have ye?'

'Yes, sir, says I.'

'What did you kill?'

'Did not kill anything, sir—didn't shoot her off—was afraid she would kick—I knew blamed well she would.'

'Gimmie that gun!' the old man said, mad as sin.

And he took aim at a sapling on the other side of the road, and I began to drop back out of danger. And the next moment I heard the earthquake, and saw the Queen Anne whirling end over end in the air, and the old man spinning round on one heel, with one leg up and both hands on his jaw, and the bark flying from that old sapling like there was a hail storm. The old man's shoulder was set back three inches and his jaw turned black and blue, and he had to lay up for three days. Cholera, or nothing else, can scare me the way I was scared that time.

Madrid has a new journal, the title of which signifies shirtless. It makes a clean breast of its principles.