

# WEEKLY GRAPHIC.

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Late of Canton, formerly of St. Louis, has located permanently in KIRKSVILLE, and will give special attention to diseases of the EYE, EAR, NOSE AND THROAT.

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## MORLEY FARM.

BY JOHN R. MUSICK  
AUTHOR OF "ORLAND HYDE,"  
"BACK TO THE OLD FARM,"  
"THE COLUMBIAN HISTORICAL NOVELS," ETC.

### CHAPTER IV.

It was nearly dark when he reached home, and after putting away his horse, and giving some instructions to Jim, he went to the house. Having had no dinner, the supper was very agreeable to him, for though he was vexed and worried with the cares of the head of the family, he was youthful and youthful stomachs demand frequent replenishing.

His mind was made up now, come what would, he would tell his mother all, and ask why she had concealed from him the fact that there was a mortgage on the farm. As soon as the children were all put to bed, and he and his mother were alone, he asked: "Mother, why did you not tell me about the mortgage?" "Mortgage, what mortgage child?"

"The mortgage on the farm, which father gave to Hicks." The mother's eyes grew round with wonder, and after giving him a look of incredulity, she asked: "What do you mean, my son?" "I mean, mother, that the records show that my father made a mortgage at the time the note was paid to Wm. Hicks for three thousand seven hundred and forty eight dollars, and it shows that you executed the mortgage with him, assigning your dower interest."

"The widow could only stare in wonder. "Mother, do you really know nothing of the mortgage?" "I never heard of it before." "And did you sign it?" "Never." "Then Joe Hicks has attempted to perpetrate a forgery on us, and he shall suffer for it. I will go before the magistrate to-morrow and swear out a warrant."

The face of the widow grew troubled and tears came into her eyes as her son explained how he was informed by George Hicks of the mortgage in the records. "It was a fraud, a forgery, and I will have him arrested to-morrow." The mother arose, trembling, from her chair and advanced to her son. Laying her hand on his shoulder, she said with a voice that was husky with emotion: "Don't do it, my son; don't do it."

"Why not?" "Joseph Hicks is a very crafty man. He is rich and has had the experience of the best lawyers. Your poor mother is ignorant of all those legal technicalities, and she does not understand it. Your father is dead. The mouth that could clear all this up will never speak; the tongue that might throw light on all this dark mystery is silenced forever, and we would be working in the dark."

"But, mother, don't you know if you signed the papers or not?" "I have no knowledge of having done so."

"Then he forged your name." "Wait until you know certainly. Go and consult with Mr. Graham on the matter."

"I will do that in the morning. In the meanwhile, mother, let us say nothing more about this."

"Seems to me that you go to see Mr. Graham a heap' here lately. Wonder if them purty blue eyes of his gal hain't got something to do with yer visits?" Robert pretended not to hear him, and went to his horse, mounted and galloped away. Reaching Mr. Graham's home, he asked for the gentleman.

"Mr. Graham, did you know there was a mortgage on our farm?" "I never until Joe Hicks told me yesterday." "Do you believe it is genuine?" "It is all regular on its face, Robert."

"But father said nothing about that mortgage, and mother has no knowledge of having ever signed it." "The records show that the mortgage was regularly acknowledged before Mr. Woods the notary public, and he is an honorable gentleman. If he says your mother signed the papers she certainly did."

The youth was silent for a few moments, and then, his passion getting the better of his good sense, he declared that the whole thing was a forgery, and he would have Joe Hicks arrested.

"Come, come, Robert," said the old gentleman, mildly, "let us be reasonable. Mr. Hicks might do some things that appear shady, he has too much good sense to perpetrate a forgery so bold that he would be sure to be caught in it. Before you do anything in the matter, let us go to Mr. Woods and talk with him."

Robert assented, and after dinner they set out for the county seat, which they reached in due time and called at the office of Mr. Woods, the notary. He was asked to refer to his record of the date of the acknowledgment and see if he had taken the acknowledgment of Mr. and Mrs. Morley to the mortgage.

"Yes, sir, I did," he answered, looking over his record. "I wrote the instrument, and they signed and acknowledged it before me."

"But mother—" began Bob. Mr. Graham stopped him and concluded:

"Mrs. Morley has no recollection of having executed the instrument. That can be hardly possible. I am sure her husband explained it to her, and when I asked her the proper questions she answered them correctly."

"There is no doubt of this, is there?" "None in the least. The mortgage was given to secure a note of which Mr. Morley was surety."

"Let us go, Robert." Robert was so full of mystery, indignation and surprise that he could scarcely speak; when they were well on their way home Robert asked:

"Mr. Graham, are we to submit to this outrage? I am sure my mother did not sign that paper knowing what it contained."

"Bob, did your mother know when your father indorsed for Owen first, and did she approve of it?"

"No, sir; she was opposed to it."

"Did he not say that the note was paid off?" "He did, and it was."

"So it was, but paid by the mortgage. Now let me give you my theory of the case, and it is correct. Your father deceived your mother in that matter. He did not wish to annoy her with the matter that the note was really not paid, and in some way got her to sign the paper without her understanding the contents of the instrument. Had he lived he could have paid it off, and she, perhaps never been the wiser. Now, your mother can go into court, contest the mortgage and save the dower interest in the farm, but it will drag the name of your dead father into court in a way that will not be honorable to his memory, although what he did was prompted by the kindness of his heart."

"No, no, never. I will pay the mortgage in full if I give my life to do so, before I allow the name

of my dead father to be smirched, cried the youth quickly.

"That is a heroic resolution, Robert, and may heaven help you," said Mr. Graham, as they shook hands at the cross-roads and parted.

### CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT ADVENTURE.  
"My son, what have you learned?" the mother asked as soon as they were alone.

"Mother, I want you to try and remember the dates and incidents I am going to ask you about." "I will do my best."

"Do you remember the day that the note of father and Owens was paid?" "Yes."

"Were you with father in the office of Mr. Wood that day?" "I believe I was."

"Do you remember about any paper being signed?" "I remember something about a paper."

"Did you write your name on it?" "Yes, just below your father's; but I did not know it was a mortgage."

"Mother, it was." "Then it was a trick. It was a fraud."

"Hush, mother. Don't ever tell any one that you did not perfectly understand it."

"Why?" "It would disgrace the name of father if you did. He was the one who had it done."

The widow sank back into her chair as if she had been struck a blow. Could it be possible that her husband, whom she had ever known to be honorable, had perpetrated a fraud on his own wife and children. After a moment she gasped:

"Robert, what do you mean?" "Mother, did you know that father indorsed for Owens?"

"Not at that time." "When you learned he had done so, did you not scold him for doing it?"

"Yes, though I believed Owens was honest I thought it was wrong for your father to indorse for so large an amount."

"No doubt father thought so, too; but having done it, and as Owens left the country, he did what was the best, paid the debt by extending it. He knew you would oppose the mortgage. He knew that Joe Hicks would not be satisfied with anything else, and consequently he decided to perpetrate a little fraud to save you anxiety."

When he asked you to sign the mortgage he probably told you that it was something else, or that it was the final settling up of the Owens affair. Had father lived he would have paid it off without any trouble, but he died. It was the unexpected that happened, and now we must maintain that name and memory as pure as the heart was."

Mother, we must be heroic and pay the debt. I can do it. I can work, you can manage, and we will pay it off and save the old farm and father's name."

When he ceased speaking the widow was weeping. She recalled many little things which had slipped her memory that transpired on that fatal day and many things that had been mysterious were as plain as day now.

She sobbed for several moments in silence, and then, with that heroic resolution which people form when nothing better can be done, she said:

"You are right, my boy, my own brave boy. I will be as heroic as you are. We will face the world and pay the debt."

"There is yet a hope, mother, that Owens will return and at least help us pay it."

The widow shook her head and said:

"Let us be prepared for the worst."

"We will, mother. We will face the very worst that comes, and expect nothing better. If it should come we will be happily surprised."

The youth went to bed that night feeling better. He slept soundly. It was all over; they

knew the very worst; they had reached the bottom, and there was no further depths to go, and he felt relieved.

When morning came he awoke refreshed and began to look at life anew. Some of his dearest plans—plans that had become treasures to his soul—would have to be abandoned. For instance, his ambition to enter the university and take the degree of master of arts had to be abandoned. He must go through life as a simple husbandman, but that need not prevent his being a scholar. He remembered that some of the greatest men our country has ever known had never been in college. It had been a hard struggle to give up this treasure, this idol of his heart, but he had done it, and now felt relieved and was ready to face the inevitable.

The youth was strong and healthy and still ambitious, but that ambition was changed. It was now the desire of his heart to save the farm from the mortgage.

He worked faithfully. The autumn days were bright and sunny. Summer seemed to linger in the lap of winter, and the grass on the hills was still green, while the leaves of the forests had matured and turned crimson and gold.

There is a beauty and yet a sadness in autumn. It indicates death and decay. We see the leaves and flowers fade, just as we see old age cause the cheek to fade and the eye to grow dim. The old age may be beautiful, yet it is sad, as is the serene and yellow leaf of autumn. No longer the birds sing their gayest songs in the leaves through which the chilling blasts of autumn sweep. Then they fall, and the white wadding sheet of snow buries them until the resurrection morn of spring comes and all awake to new life and gladness.

How can one deny the existence of God or not believe in the resurrection, when year by year we receive such indisputable proofs of death and resurrection?

When joyous spring returned it found no busier farmer in all the land than Bob Morley. He takes the greatest care to fertilize the land he expected to cultivate.

He was not only a practical farmer but a theoretical one as well. He read all the best publications and periodicals on agriculture and studied the best means. He knew best how to fertilize and how to get the greatest yield from the land.

The ground was mellow and rich, and not too dry when plowed. He then had one team with a harrow going over it, tearing and crushing the great clods to infinitesimal bits, and when it had been carefully prepared was marked off, and then with the best plow that the market could produce he proceeded to plant it as rapidly as possible. One thing he observed, and practiced. He allowed as short a space of time to expire between the original plowing and planting as possible. He got his corn nearly all in, when there came one of those gentle, warm spring rains which are sent by the kind Father that watches over all to bring up the corn, and in a very short time shoots of tender green could be seen along the paths marked by the wheels of the plow.

The wheat sowed the autumn before was already a mass of green, so were the meadows, and the oats carpeting the hillsides on which they were sown.

"Mother," said the youth pointing to the brilliant prospect before them, "we will pay not only the interest but the mortgage this year."

Such a thing was truly possible, for wheat then was a dollar per bushel, and they had cattle to fatten on the pasture and corn he was growing. The meadows were in excellent condition and bid fair to promise abundance of hay.

"The mother smiled. It was the first time he had seen her smile since his father died. It was a glorious prospect. But we are prone to forget that in this fleeting world the more brilliant the prospect the more signal will be the

darkest of eves. "Where are you going to-day, Robert?" the mother asked.

"I am going to town this afternoon, mother, to get some plows sharpened."

"You will not start until after dinner?" "No, mother."

"And then you will be home before dark, will you not?" "If I can mother. I will come home as soon as I can get the work done."

He went to the great barn and shed rooms, with which the well-regulated "Morley Farm" was supplied, and loaded cultivators and plows into his wagon. The farm machinery had not been touched since the season before, but everything was bright and new. There are many farmers who lack a proper shelter for their machinery that lose more in the course of a few years than it would take to build barns and proper covering for it. Nothing more indicates the thriftless, sloven farmer than to see a reaper or mower standing out in the field from the hour the farmer is done using it until next season. All through the long months, the snow and rains of winter and spring, it is exposed to the weather and the once beautiful machine is nothing but a rotten, rusted wreck of its former self when needed for use.

Such was not the case at "Morley Farm." The machinery that would last the sloven farmer only a year or two, at most, was kept in good repair for years.

Robert drove off to town with his plows and cultivators, and found the blacksmith so busy that he was unable to do his work for him until so late in the evening that the sun was setting before he started home.

The horses, anxious to get home and tired of long waiting, had grown restless. They sped down the broad road at a rapid gait and soon brought him to the dark place between two hills where the road was very narrow.

The moon rose late, and though it was starlight the road was deep down between the wooded hills and quite dark.

He could scarce see his hand before him and did not notice the dark form before him until a voice called out:

"Stop that, be ye a goin' to run right over a cove?" "No," he answered, reining back his horses. "Are you on horse-back or on foot?"

"I ain't travellin' at all." "What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Who are you waiting for?" "The boss. He will be here soon."

"Boss?" he had it on his tongue to ask what boss, when the man interrupted him by saying: "Goin' to take a big load."

Without knowing what the man really meant, he answered: "I don't know."

"Guess it's owin' how much will be left far ye?" "Yes."

Then he began to wonder what in the world the man was talking about. Here was a mystery to him which he was unable to solve.

All the while he had been waiting in the road for the man to get out of his way. He had evidently mistaken him for some one else, and Robert determined not to deceive him as long as possible.

"Air ye goin' right on?" asked the man coming to the side of the wagon. It was so dark that Robert could not see his features, but from the outline he knew he was a powerful man. Robert answered: "Yes."

"Wall of ye meet Bill down there, tell him to come up here; I don't think we kin do anything afore midnight."

"What on earth does he mean to do?" the youth asked himself. He knew that the man was not an inhabitant of the county, for he was partially acquainted with nearly all the people in the neighborhood, and that voice of his was strange to him.

"I will send him to you if I find him," said Robert, glad to drive on and leave such a mysterious person.

The horses jogged along the dark road, occasionally pricking up their ears and sniffing the air mysteriously, if not suspiciously.

Though he could see no one, he was certain that there was some one near, for Old Blaze became very much excited at one point in the road, and shyed away from it, almost driving him into the woods.

But he pulled the horse back, and he held his team in the middle of the road, while they sniffed the air suspiciously, and seemed loth to pass certain points.

At last he discovered the figure of a man right in the road before him, and remembering the instructions put on him, he asked: "Is that Bill?"

"Yes," answered a deep, hoarse voice.

"He is waiting for you up there, and said for you to come."

"Who, Tom?" "Yes."

"Ye brought yee wagon did ye?" "Yes."

"What's goin' to be the hook out?"

Not knowing what the question meant, he made the wisest answer possible.

"I don't know."

"I hope it may be as good as before, but Tom's a waitin' an' I'd better be goin'. D'ye hear any one say when we'd git through?"

"He said not before midnight."

"Wall I guess not."

Then the fellow went away and Robert was more mystified than ever. It was as if he had run upon some secret society, and had partially staggered on to some of their passwords and grips.

He reached home puzzled and confused by his mysterious adventure.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Marvellous Results.

From a letter written by Rev. J. Gunderman, of Diamonddale, Mich., we are permitted to make this extract: "I have no hesitation in recommending Dr. King's New Discovery, as the results were almost marvelous in the case of my wife. While I was pastor of the Baptist church at Rives Junction she was brought down with pneumonia succeeding La Grippe. Terrible paroxysms of coughing would last hours with little interruption and it seemed as if she could not survive them. A friend recommended Dr. King's New Discovery; it was quick in its work and highly satisfactory in results." Trial bottles free at B. F. Henry's drug store. Regular size 50c and \$1.

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