

The Buffamoy's Journal.

BY S. J. ROW.

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Select Poetry.

THE BRIDAL.

Not a laugh was heard, not a joyous note,
As our friend to the bridal was hurried;
Not a wit discharged his farewell shot,
As the bachelor went to be married.
We married him quickly to save his fright,
Our heads from the sad sight turning;
And sighed, as we stood in the lamp's dim light,
To think that he was not more discerning.
To think that a bachelor free and bright,
Should there at the altar at dead of night,
Be caught in the snare that bound him
Few and short were the words we said,
Though of wine and cake partaking,
We ascended him from the scene of dread,
While his knees were awfully shaking.
Slowly and sadly we marched him down
From the first to the lowest story;
And we never heard or seen the poor man
Whom we left alone in his glory.

SAVED FROM DISGRACE.

A SLEIGH RIDE AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

Jonas Blenchford, with coat, hat and gloves already on, heard the tinkle of the sleigh bells, and arose to go down, but when he reached the door, he felt a light touch upon his arm, and heard the well known voice of his daughter.
"Pa, may I go?"
"But I'm only going to the bank, Grace."
"After that, father. I will go there and wait for you. It will not take me five minutes to get ready."
"Well—well! Be easy, and I'll wait," said the old gentleman, quite merrily, "and I'll give you such a sleigh ride as you never had before—a sleigh ride extraordinary. You know I have the black before the cutter."
"So much the better," said Grace; and she ran away to dress, little dreaming how the promise would be kept.
John Normandy stood by the window looking upon the busy street, ever and anon glancing at his watch, as though impatient for the time to pass. And indeed he was. He had no thought for what was passing in the street below. He saw Jonas Blenchford and his daughter as they drove up to the bank, but forgot them the moment they passed from sight within the entrance. He had weighty thoughts upon his mind, that could not be cast aside by any ordinary occurrence.

He was somewhere about thirty years of age, tall, erect, dignified, and very plain of feature. He had battled with discouragements and poverty until his very face bore marks of the terrible struggles, but he had conquered. His motto had ever been "Onward and upward," and, never giving way, he had at last become cashier of the bank of E—, a position both honorable and lucrative.
Only a twelvemonth had he held the position, but in that short time he had won the confidence of the officers of the bank, the regard of his fellow employees, and was generally liked by those doing business with him.
Still he was meagre. He lived a life of his own. When the bank was closed for the day, he hurried away to his lodgings, and was seen no more until the hour of business the next day. Business was his only pleasure. He talked little—worked much; he was a poor companion, but a true friend.
He merely turned his head when the president and his daughter entered the bank, and then went back to his thinking; but Blenchford seemed disposed to molest him.
"By dressing, Normandy?"
"Have encountered so much reality that there is but little of the imaginary left," said he, turning toward them, half reluctantly.
"Oh, yes! Normandy. Not quite thirty. I should judge, and settling down into an old man, than I am. What are you thinking about? It must not be. Grace, can you do anything to show this practical old gentleman the error of his ways? I'll leave you with him to try, while I devote a few moments to business."
"Don't forget the ride, father."
"Never fear. You shall have it."
Normandy was really vexed to see the old gentleman get away, and leave him to entertain the useless Grace Blenchford. Grace reported it, and shied him by a prey of words that brought the smile to his face in spite of himself, and provoked some smart replies, that sounded strange—strange to his lips. When Blenchford returned home, he found them quite sociable. Normandy, leaning over the desk, listened to Grace's story, and occasionally putting in a word that showed how well he was enjoying himself.

"Drawing by—smoke!" exclaimed Blenchford in surprise, but his manner changed immediately. Some very ungentle remarks he made. Wait! Normandy mistake my place."
"I should be pleased," said he.
"Very good, Normandy; and remember that I promised her a ride such as she never had before."
"A ride extraordinary, father."
"Yes, yes; that was it. Do not disappoint her."
"Assuredly not."
While Normandy was drawing on his coat, a gentleman stepped to his side and spoke to him in a very low tone. Normandy's face blanched whiter than the snow, but he recovered instantly.
"Thank you, Ganson, for this proof of your friendship, but I have known it for some hours. Please let it rest where it is, if you can, and I will make it all right in the morning. There is some great mistake."

With a buoyancy of manner that surprised Grace, after what she had seen, he conducted her to the sleigh, and with a gallantry little expected from one so practical, he handed her in, arranging the robes about her even more skillfully than her old father could have done. Then he took his seat by her side, and off they went.
Through the crowded streets, through the less crowded suburbs, out into the quiet country, Normandy all the while chatting merrily, a startling contrast to his real feelings. But when once they were out of the reach of the din of the great city, his manner changed entirely. Turning his dark, searching eyes full upon his companion's beautiful face, he asked, earnestly, almost beseechingly:
"Miss Blenchford, can you trust me?"
Surprised and somewhat annoyed, she hardly knew what to answer. But she saw that he was in earnest, and in the brief time, she thought of all her acquaintances, and not one of them would she trust sooner.
"Why do you ask, Mr. Normandy?"
"If I should tell you," said he, "that those whom you hold most dear, yourself included, were in great peril, and a peril that you never could guess, and that I had the power to save you all, would you believe me? Would you trust me? Would you be guided by me for a brief time?"
Startled by his manner, and convinced by his earnestness, she replied as earnestly:
"Yes, Mr. Normandy; I can and do trust you. But why do you ask?"
"Do not ask me. It will be enough to tell you that you and your father and brother are truly in great danger, and if you will place implicit confidence in me, I can save you. Drop your veil if you please. Thank you."
Almost tenderly he wrapped the robes around her, yet uttering no word. Then gathering the reins, he gave the horse a light blow, and away they went, at a pace that soon left the city far out of sight. "An extraordinary ride, surely," thought Grace, as they sped over the crisp snow; and there was a wonder how it would end. But she felt no fear, no regret, that she had placed herself in his hands.
For hours they rode, he doing all in his power to entertain her, succeeding so well that she almost forgot the singular position, in listening to his brilliant talk and varied experiences. About dark they drew up at a farm house, where Normandy ordered supper. While it was preparing, he asked after the comfort of his horse, rubbing him down with his own hand and feeding him; for the ride was not yet over.
"We have four hours yet to ride," said he to Grace. "Shall we go on?"
"I trust you, Mr. Normandy. Let me help you if I can."
"Thank you! Thank you, Miss Blenchford," he said gratefully. "You shall not repent it."
Out into the night they started again. He procured additional robes at the farm-house, and wrapped his fair companion so closely that she did not feel the biting cold. He needed no covering; his blood was at a fever heat, defying the cold north wind more effectively than the warmest furs.
On they drove through the still keen air; past farmhouses, over hills, across rivers, through dense woods and damp valleys, and yet the end of that ride was not yet.
Could it be that John Normandy was playing false? Did he know that the officers of the law were searching for him far and near? That his name and description had been flashed over the wires in all directions? That his name was whispered upon the street as a defaulter—a robber? That he was already charged with the abduction of Jonas Blenchford's fair daughter? He could not have driven faster had he known all of these, nor have seemed more impatient to get over the ground. It looked very dark, yet Grace Blenchford trusted him.
"We are almost there," said he, halting the steaming horse, and pointing to a light ahead. "Are you sorry that you trusted me? It is not too late yet."
"Your conduct is very strange, yet I have no fear," replied Grace.
"You are one among a thousand," he said, honestly.
He stepped out and taking the bells from the horse, stowed them away in the sleigh. Then he drove on cautiously toward the light.
"It is our lesson," said he. "It tells us that I am in time."
He stopped again when within a few hundred yards of the house. Securing and well blanketing the horse, he helped Grace to alight, and together they walked toward the building.
"We must be very cautious, else our ride will be for naught."
He drew a revolver from his breast, and placed it in his great coat pocket, where he could reach it without waste of time.
"I have come prepared," he whispered, feeling his companion's arm tremble within his own. "Do not fear. I would rather lose my life than that one hair of your head should be harmed."
They stopped in the shadow, just before the door.
"Now, Miss Blenchford, you will have need of all your courage and fortitude," he whispered. "Within this house you see all that which will be agony to you, but it can not be avoided. By no other means could I save the Blenchford name from disgrace. Follow me."
Revolver in hand, he burst open the door, and entered, quickly followed by Grace.
With a cry of fierce anger, the only occupant of the room sprang up to meet the intruders; but the moment the light fell upon their faces he sank back into the chair with a groan, and buried his face in his hands.
"Oh God! Lost, lost!"
Grace Blenchford recognized her only brother James; and, seeing his distress, she sprang to his side to comfort him.
"Don't touch me, Grace!" he exclaimed, in terror. "Normandy, take her away! Don't let her come near me! Why did you bring her here? Oh, my sister is impossible! Great God! I shall go mad! I can not endure it! Oh, why did you ever bring her here?"
"To save you," said John.
He had closed and bolted the door, but still retained the revolver in his hand. He moved nearer to the conscience-stricken man.
"James Blenchford, calm yourself," said he. "We have come, not to harm, but to save you. The presence of your sister ought to tell you that."
Young Blenchford raised his head with a hopeful look.
"God bless you, John Normandy! You know not what I have suffered, but I dare not go back. And now you will keep it from my dear father?"
"I will," said Normandy, solemnly. "No one shall know it, save ourselves."
"But Grace?" said James.
"She need know no more," said Normandy. "I brought her here that the sight of her might give you courage to return with us."
"John I shall tell her all," said James. "I shall tell her all, but not now."
"Where is your accomplice?"
"He will arrive in the next train. I was waiting for him."
"And that is due in thirty minutes," said Normandy, looking at his watch. "Give me the money, James, and we will leave this place before the villain arrives."
Grace saw all, but heard nothing, for they had withdrawn to the other side of the room that she might not be pained; but a great fear was weighing upon her—a dread of some approaching calamity. When they came back, she looked from one to the other for some explanation, but very little they gave her. Normandy spoke first.
"Miss Blenchford, you are puzzled at my words and actions, but you will pardon me. I know, when I tell you that it is better for all of us to say little about this matter. Your brother has been led into an error that threatened to be almost serious. Fortunately, everything is now arranged satisfactorily, thanks to your presence, and he will return to the city with us. Watch over him and pray for him, that he may not stumble again."
"I ask it," said James; and without another word they left the house, and were soon on their way back to the city.
Silently they rode until the limits of the city were reached. Then Normandy gave the reins to James, and alighting, bade them adieu.
"But you, John," said James, "what will you do?"
"Fear not for me," replied Normandy, adding in a whisper, "I shall not betray you whatever happens."
Then he charged them both never to tell what had passed between them that night; and, without waiting to hear their replies, he strode rapidly down the street.
He went directly to the bank, reaching it just at opening time, and, without a word to any one, went straight to the vaults—his custom every morning—and deposited the money that James Blenchford had stolen from them. Then he went back and met the officer to arrest him. He expected it, but he had left the money in his place, and now he was ready for prison. He felt thankful that he had been allowed so much time. He had saved James Blenchford, his father and Grace, and what did he care now? He was alone in the world; he had done his duty, and had hope. James Blenchford would be in prison, but Normandy would hear nothing about surrendering himself.
"I will tell you a secret, James, and then you will see a motive for my actions. I love your sister better than my own wife, and I could not bear to have a word whispered against her. Let it rest as it is. I am content."
Again James Blenchford promised, but it was hard for him to abide by it. With all his faults he had a generous heart. That very day he told Grace the whole story of his disgrace, and how Normandy was suffering for them; and she was touched by the recital, and thought of every means to liberate him.
"Where is the money, James?"
"Normandy placed it in the safe, unknown to any one."
"And has it not been found? Would not the whole matter be looked upon as a great blunder; and would not Mr. Normandy be liberated at once, and exonerated from all blame, if the money was found there?"
Away went James, without waiting to answer his sister's question, and within ten minutes was mounting the steps to the bank-lose my life than that one hair of your head should be harmed."
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"Miss Blenchford, you are puzzled at my words and actions, but you will pardon me. I know, when I tell you that it is better for all of us to say little about this matter. Your brother has been led into an error that threatened to be almost serious. Fortunately, everything is now arranged satisfactorily, thanks to your presence, and he will return to the city with us. Watch over him and pray for him, that he may not stumble again."
"I ask it," said James; and without another word they left the house, and were soon on their way back to the city.
Silently they rode until the limits of the city were reached. Then Normandy gave the reins to James, and alighting, bade them adieu.
"But you, John," said James, "what will you do?"
"Fear not for me," replied Normandy, adding in a whisper, "I shall not betray you whatever happens."
Then he charged them both never to tell what had passed between them that night; and, without waiting to hear their replies, he strode rapidly down the street.
He went directly to the bank, reaching it just at opening time, and, without a word to any one, went straight to the vaults—his custom every morning—and deposited the money that James Blenchford had stolen from them. Then he went back and met the officer to arrest him. He expected it, but he had left the money in his place, and now he was ready for prison. He felt thankful that he had been allowed so much time. He had saved James Blenchford, his father and Grace, and what did he care now? He was alone in the world; he had done his duty, and had hope. James Blenchford would be in prison, but Normandy would hear nothing about surrendering himself.
"I will tell you a secret, James, and then you will see a motive for my actions. I love your sister better than my own wife, and I could not bear to have a word whispered against her. Let it rest as it is. I am content."
Again James Blenchford promised, but it was hard for him to abide by it. With all his faults he had a generous heart. That very day he told Grace the whole story of his disgrace, and how Normandy was suffering for them; and she was touched by the recital, and thought of every means to liberate him.
"Where is the money, James?"
"Normandy placed it in the safe, unknown to any one."
"And has it not been found? Would not the whole matter be looked upon as a great blunder; and would not Mr. Normandy be liberated at once, and exonerated from all blame, if the money was found there?"
Away went James, without waiting to answer his sister's question, and within ten minutes was mounting the steps to the bank-lose my life than that one hair of your head should be harmed."
They stopped in the shadow, just before the door.
"Now, Miss Blenchford, you will have need of all your courage and fortitude," he whispered. "Within this house you see all that which will be agony to you, but it can not be avoided. By no other means could I save the Blenchford name from disgrace. Follow me."
Revolver in hand, he burst open the door, and entered, quickly followed by Grace.
With a cry of fierce anger, the only occupant of the room sprang up to meet the intruders; but the moment the light fell upon their faces he sank back into the chair with a groan, and buried his face in his hands.
"Oh God! Lost, lost!"
Grace Blenchford recognized her only brother James; and, seeing his distress, she sprang to his side to comfort him.
"Don't touch me, Grace!" he exclaimed, in terror. "Normandy, take her away! Don't let her come near me! Why did you bring her here? Oh, my sister is impossible! Great God! I shall go mad! I can not endure it! Oh, why did you ever bring her here?"
"To save you," said John.
He had closed and bolted the door, but still retained the revolver in his hand. He moved nearer to the conscience-stricken man.
"James Blenchford, calm yourself," said he. "We have come, not to harm, but to save you. The presence of your sister ought to tell you that."
Young Blenchford raised his head with a hopeful look.
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