

Rev. J. McKim

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NATIONAL OPINION.

VOLUME 9. BRADFORD, VERMONT, SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1874. NUMBER 1.

The Ride of Collins Graves.

An Incident of the Flood in Massachusetts, on May 16, 1874.

BY JOHN RYLAND O'BRIEN.

No song of a soldier riding down
 To the raging light from Winchester town;
 No song of a time that shook the earth
 With the nation's throes at a nation's birth;
 But the song of a brave man, free from fear
 As Sheridan's self, or Paul Revere;
 Who risked what they risked, free from strife,
 And his promise of glorious pay—his life.

The peaceful valley has wakened and stirred,
 And the answering echoes of life are heard;
 The dew still clings to the trees and grass,
 And the early toilers smiling pass.
 As they glance aside at the white-walled homes
 Or up the valleys, where merrily comes
 The brook that sparkles in diamond rills
 As the sun comes over the Hampshire hills.

What was it, that passed like an ominous
 breath,
 Like a shadow of fear or a touch of death?
 What was it? The valley is peaceful still,
 And the leaves are soft on top of the hill.
 It was not a sound nor a thing of sense—
 But a pain, like the pang of the short suspense
 That wraps the being of those who see
 At their feet the gift of Eternity!

The air of the valley has felt the chill;
 The workers pause at the door of the mill;
 The housewife, keen to the shivering air,
 Arrests her foot on the cottage stair,
 Instinctively taught by the mother love,
 And thinks of the sleeping ones above!

Why start the listeners? Why does the
 course
 Of the mill-stream waken? Is it a horse,
 Hark to the sound of his hoofs, they say,
 That gallops so wildly Williamsburg way?
 God! what was that, like a human shriek
 From the winding valley? Will nobody speak
 Will nobody answer those women who cry
 As their feet the gift of Eternity?

Whence come they? Listen! And, now they
 hear
 The sound of the galloping horse-hoofs near;
 They watch the friend of the vale, and see
 The rider, who flounders so unskillfully,
 With waving arms and warning scream
 To the home-filled banks of the valley stream
 He draws no rein, but he shakes the street
 With a shout and the ring of the galloping
 feet.

And this the cry that he flings to the wind:
 "To the hills for your lives! The flood is
 behind!"

He cries and is gone; but they know the
 worst—
 The treacherous Williamsburg dam has burst!
 The basin that nourished their happy homes
 Is changed to a deluge—It comes! It comes!
 A monster in aspect, with shaggy front
 Of what is not a thing, and the front
 Of the dweller's eyes, they shatter—white-oiled
 and hoarse.

The merciless terror fills the course
 Of the narrow valley, and rushing raves,
 With death on the first of its hissing waves,
 Till cottage and street and crowded mill
 Are crumpled and crushed.

But onward still,
 In front of the roaring flood is heard
 The galloping horse and the warning word,
 Thank God, that the brave man's life is
 spared!

From Williamsburg town he nobly dared
 To rise with the flood and to take the road
 In front of the terrible wrath of the sea,
 For miles it thundered and crashed behind,
 But he looked ahead with a steadfast mind;
 "They need not be warded," was all he said,
 As away on his terrible ride he sped.

When heroes are called for, bring the crown
 To this Yankee valley, send him down
 On the stream of time with the Curtiss old;
 His deed as the Roman's was brave and bold,
 And the tale can be told a thrice awake,
 For he offered his life for the people's sake.

"Not so fast, little one! Every day, for a fortnight, and in six weeks forgetfulness of my very existence."

A look of mingled love and reproach from her beautiful dark eyes, a moment of silence, and he spoke again:

"You have your own way, usually, have you not, Jessie?"

"I have rarely been crossed in my life," she replied with a smile, "and since mamma died, poor papa seems only to live for me!"

"Well, *cara mia*, listen! When the full comes, persuade your father to bring you abroad for six months. You can study music and the languages; we can all be together. To learn a language thoroughly, make love in it, says an old scholar. Think of a winter for us in Italy! Yes, dear Jessie, if your wishes are commands your father will surely bring you to me, ere long."

So they parted. Clive Lee went over the ocean, and during the summer that followed, Jessie proved a most faithful correspondent.

Early in the fall, Mr. Trevellyn was taken very ill, so that for many weeks he lay between life and death. Letter after letter came from young Lee, which Jessie scarce found time to read, much less to answer.

"Cousin John," she said one morning to Mr. Trevellyn's nephew, a young man of twenty-five years of age, who had been a constant attendant at her father's bedside; "Cousin John, you know I correspond with Clive Lee, but poor papa's illness has left me no time for my pen. Please write Clive, explain the cause of my silence, and tell him," she added, with a tell-tale blush, "that we do not forget him."

As soon as Mr. Trevellyn was able to move, his physicians ordered him South. It was not until they reached Key West (the point of destination) that Jessie had leisure for a careful perusal of Clive's letters. She noted with pain how they had grown less tender but reproachful in tone, till, at the last, they were cold and infrequent.

"I am sure he can't have received John's letter," she said to herself; "but I will write to day and explain all. Poor Clive! Yes, I will write this very day."

For an hour her pen moved over and across the paper, filling sheet after sheet with details of the past three months. As she was sealing her letter, a knock was heard, and to her cheerful "Come in!" a tall figure appeared in the door-way.

"Good morning, fair cousin, I have just left your father very comfortable. Have you any commands?"

"Thanks, John, just post this missive for the European mail. What would papa and I do without you? You seem like his own son, and my own brother!"

"I am content to be his son, dear Jessie, but not your brother."

"Cousin," said the young girl, scarce heeding his reply, "did you write Clive, as I asked you to do?"

"Did I ever break a promise to you Jessie?"

"I remember no promise, John, but simply my request. Poor Clive evidently knows nothing of papa's illness."

"Oh no! this—pointing to the packet—explains all."

Weeks passed. No letters from young Lee came to cheer the heart of Jessie, as day after day she sat in her father's sick-room. She grew pained; then hurt; finally annoyed and indignant. Meanwhile, Mr. Trevellyn was growing weaker and weaker with each day, and conscious of his approaching end, he begged his daughter to reward the devotion of young Trevellyn toward himself by giving him her hand.

"I used to fancy, darling child," murmured the sick man, "that young Lee loved you! But he is far away, and too young to think of marriage. John worships you. He has maturity, and much wisdom. I should die easier to see you his wife and under his protection."

With a heart half-broken at her lover's neglect and her father's sinking condition, Jessie consented to his dying request. A quiet bridal in the sick-room, a few weary, sad days of watching, and our heroine was an orphan.

She begged her husband to take her back to her own home; and in

another week she found herself once more at their country seat, just out of New York.

The evening after her arrival a letter was put into her hands, addressed to her maiden name. She started at sight of the old familiar "Miss Jessie," and grew pale to faintness as she tore open the envelope and recognized the handwriting.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Trevellyn, as he marked her pallor.

"I am tired, and will go up-stairs, I think."

"Have you a letter?" he asked.

"Only a note from a friend," she quietly replied.

In her own room, without waiting even to close the door, she read a long, loving letter from Clive, full of self-reproaches, and sympathy for her. An accidental meeting with a friend had given him the first intelligence of her father's illness, and their journey South. Why had not some friend written him for her? He had been so wounded by her silence. Now he begged forgiveness for words of reproach and coldness. Might he write her father and claim her for his own Jessie? Time had no wings while he waited her reply—now the impatient lover.

Mr. Trevellyn finished his paper and cigar, looked at his watch, then left the room in search of his wife.

Through the open door of her room he saw her sitting silent and motionless, the fire of a chilly May evening shinging upon her golden hair.

"What a picture for my home," he softly whispered, as he bent over her. "A face of marble whiteness, a trembling hand which grasped the letter, startled him into saying,—"Dear Jessie, there should be no secrets between man and wife. May I see the note which so strangely affects you?"

"You can not!" was the brief, measured reply, as she rose from her chair, no longer the timid, suffering girl, but a wrothed and outraged woman. "You can not read it, though I tell you from whose pen it came. Dearly I loved this man from whom your perfidy has forever separated me. My answer you shall hear, for I am your wife," she bitterly added. "It shall be my care that it safely reaches Mr. Lee."

A night of tears and agony for Jessie, of mingled remorse and rage for her husband, and she stood before him in the morning light, an open letter in her hand.

"Mr. Trevellyn, you will hear what I have written my friend:

"MY DEAR MR. LEE—

"After a long winter, passed in the South at the bedside of my father, I have returned to my old home an orphan, but a wife. In the presence of my dying father I married his nephew, Mr. John Trevellyn. This brief note must be my reply to your letter written a fortnight since. God bless you forever."

"JESSIE T—"

Years rolled on. John Trevellyn sought in the excitement of political life to forget the past. Jessie's beauty and grace were everywhere acknowledged; but it was the perfection of the statue which no loving heart and hand warmed into happy life.

Within a few months after nine years of married life, John Trevellyn had died, but not before he had confessed to Jessie in bitter, penitent humiliation, the deception practiced toward Clive Lee and herself. Freely, even lovingly, she had forgiven him.

But the old wound was not healed, and the remembrance of her old lover—now a diplomat at a foreign court—was ever one of mingled pleasure and pain.

On the morning of which we write, Mrs. Trevellyn had seen in a daily paper the announcement that Mr. Lee, after an absence of ten years, had returned to his native land for a brief visit.

With a world of memories stirring her heart to its very depth, she had almost involuntarily wandered out to the old trysting-place.

"How strange!" she said, as she slowly started toward her home, an hour later, "how strange that Clive should not know me! If he but knew the truth! But I can never tell him; the honor of the dead forbids it!"

As Mrs. Trevellyn stepped toward the little stile which divided the woody upland from the meadow beyond, she saw Clive Lee, quietly

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

How Arthur Ran Away.

ARTHUR was a sturdy little fellow about five years old, with hair like sunlight on a French marigold, and a little freckled face, that was a very pleasant face, too, when it did not happen to have a shade of discontent on it, as it did just now.

Arthur was giving his opinion quite freely to the great yellow cat, who sat perched on the gate-post, eyeing him with no very loving glances. You don't remember, but doubtless Kitty did, the innumerable times when Arthur had tied the string of "bell-peppers" round her neck, and left her to sneeze her unoffending head off at her leisure; nor the time he tied her to the vestry door by the tail, and she favored the company assembled at a Methodist watch-meeting with dismal howls in varied keys.

Well, as Arthur told his troubles to his feline friend, she listened with grave attention, though a close observer might have detected an expression of latent malice in the small green disc of her eye.

"I don't see why great big fellows, five years old, that dress their own selves, ought to be sent down town for a dozen pearl-buttons every time that Miss Scissors comes. Mother never gives me a chocolate-drop when I get back, either, and Miss Ellis always does, and—"

Here his eyes fell on a tall angular figure, stalking down the lane, enveloped in an unusually gaudy shawl, and carrying a few necessary articles, such as a parasol, a bundle of patterns, a reticule, an extra shawl, &c.

"Mother, you don't mean Miss Cecilia is coming here again?"

"Yes she is," was the reply from within; "and I want you—"

What she wanted Arthur did not stop to see, but darted up the lane, as if grizzly bears were in hot pursuit.

He finally stopped before a huge old-fashioned house, with lavender, heath, and sweet-williams growing within the white palings, and—yes, a fair young lady just stepping out of the door. It was his Sunday-school teacher.

"Why, Artie," and Miss Ellis stooped for a kiss, "what brings my little boy up here at eight o'clock in the morning?"

"Oh, I do know, nothing particular," said Arthur indifferently. "I shouldn't wonder, either, if I had run away."

Run away! and the blue eyes grew sober. Why, Artie! But I suppose you are going back at once!

Oh no, said Artie disdainfully, that wouldn't be running away at all. I shan't go home till to-morrow, anyhow, and perhaps I shan't for sixteen years.

Miss Ellis smiled, but only said, "If you will come with me, Artie, I'll show you a sad little sight, that is very different from your nice, pleasant home. The little boy we are going to see, has never walked in his life; his mother is dead, and he lies all alone in his room, while his father is at work. I have been to see him very often, and have read to him, and taken flowers to him; but I am afraid I shall never do that any more."

They went into a dark, dirty, street, known as "Rag Alley," and stopped before a house equally dark and dirty, but into which a ray of light had fallen four years before.

In a small room on a low bed lay a little creature, strangely bent and twisted, but with a face so sweet and touching in its beauty that Arthur held his breath. The great, wonderful blue eyes had a light more of heaven than earth; the white forehead, where the blue veins showed plainly, was shaded by long curls of pale gold color. The face, with its look of patient suffering brightened as Miss Ellis entered, and a little thin hand was held out to her.

"I'm so glad you have come, he said, with a little sigh. What little boy is that? It's little Arthur, Teddy, said Miss Ellis; he has come to see you, because he is so sorry you are sick."

I am glad you are well little boy said Teddy gravely. Is father here? A bundle of rags, with gray head,

above, rose from its kneeling position at the foot of the bed, and came round to touch the little face with a tender, loving touch.

How long has he been so, Dennis? asked Miss Ellis.

Since yesterday, mum, was the reply. The doctor says he can only last a little while now, the little saint that he is, father's poor little patient saint!

There were tears in his eyes, but he knelt down by the bedside, drawing his rough coat sleeve across his face.

Little Teddy, asked Miss Ellis bending down, do you suffer much now?

Not much, ma'am; I am only tired now. I think I shall sleep soon.

Yes, little Teddy, the sleep is almost here. The little life of pain and deformity will soon become "one grand, sweet song," the song of redemption.

Teddy, could you say a little prayer after me?

I will say anything after you, because I know it will be so good, ma'am; and the little voice repeated slowly:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
 I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
 If I should die before I wake,
 I pray the Lord my soul to take."

Arthur, gazing through his tears, saw a wondrous change upon the little face.

Teddy lifted his hand with a listening look. Don't you hear the beautiful music?

And after a minute, The beautiful music and the pretty light, shining for Teddy?

Yes, the beautiful light had shone out for little Teddy, and would shine on him forever.

After a while a little child walked into Mrs. Marden's kitchen and threw himself on her neck.

O mamma, I was going to run away and not come back for twenty-five years; and I went down to see little Teddy, and he never walked at all, and he hadn't any mother, and he is dead; and, O mamma, don't you want me to go for some pearl-buttons?

MAX ADELBERG'S new book contains the following dedication:

My original intention was to dedicate this book to the friends of my boyhood. Azanbin, Ghes, the Imam of Muscat, in memory of the happy days, when together we played marbles in the Omen desert, ducked each other in the Persian Gulf, and tortured offensive cats on the island of Kishm. But I have changed my mind; I have resolved to dedicate the book to a humorist, who has had too little fame, to the most unconscious, humorist, to the widely-scattered and multitudinous comedian who may be expressed in the concrete as The Intelligent Compositor.

To this facility of perpetrating felicitous absurdities, I am indebted for laughter that is worth a thousand groans. It was he who put into type an article of mine which contained the injunction, "Do not cast your pearls before swine," and transformed the phrase into "Do not cart your pills before." It was he who caused me to misquote the poet's inquiry, so that I propounded to the world the appalling conundrum, "where are the *earnish-ed* dead?" and it was his glorious tendency to make the sublime convulsively ridiculous that reflected the line in a poem of mine, which declared that a "coma swept o'er the heavens with its trailing skirt," and substituted the idea that a "count slept on a haymow in a traveling shirt." The kind of talent that is here displayed deserves profound reverence. It is wonderful and awful; and thus I offer it as a token of my marvellous respect.

The current reports about snow-drifts and such things remind the *Christian Union* of a "Vermont story which we heard in our boyhood." On a July day, in the present century, the mail stage was passing over "Cobot plain," when a passenger observed a woman, armed with a broad, wooden shovel, digging into a snow drift by the roadside. "Why, madam," said the traveler, don't you take snow at the top of the drift, instead of taking the trouble to dig so deep?" "Oh!" replied the woman, "the snow that is three or four years old is a great deal the best."

Boston has a woman newspaper carrier eighty-seven years old.—*Exchange.*

The time has been when a great many young women also carried newspapers; but fashions change.—*Advertiser.*

A San Francisco man closed his saloon to allow a lady overhead to die quietly, and now sues the heirs for \$350 for the favor.