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WHOLE NO 1532

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Business Cards, not exceeding one square will be inserted, for subscribers, at \$5.00 per year; non-subscribers will be charged 50c.

Thursday Morning, Feb. 8, 1855

OUR CHILDHOOD.

BY GEORGE D. FANTINE.

"I had—yet sweet to listen,
To the soft wailing of the weaver,
And think we hear the music
Our children knew so well,
To gaze out on the ocean,
And the boundless fields of air,
And feel again our boyhood wish
To roam like angels there.

There are many dreams of glances
That cling about the past—
And from the tomb of feeling
Old thoughts come thronging fast—
The forms we loved so dearly
In the happy days of youth,
The beautiful and lovely,
So faintly look upon us.

Those bright and lovely maidens
Who seemed so proud for bliss,
Too glorious and too heavenly
For such a world as this!

Whose soft dark eyes seemed swimming
In a sea of light,
And whose locks of gold were streaming
O'er brows so sunny bright.

Whose smiles were like the sunshine
In the spring-time of the year—
Like the changing gleams of April
They follow every tear.

They have passed—like hope—away—
All their loves have fled—
O'er many a heart is mourning
That they are with the dead.

Like the bright buds of summer,
They have fallen from the stem—
Yet, oh! it is a lovely death
To fade from earth like them!

And yet—the thought is maddening
To muse on such as they—
And feel that all the beautiful
Are passing fast away!

That the fair ones whom we love,
Grow to such loving breath,
Like tendrils of the clinging vine,
That perish where they rest.

And can we think of these,
In the soft and gentle sleep,
When the flowers are blossoming?
And the waves are blossoming?
For we know that winter's coming
With its cold and stormy sky—
And the glorious breath of youth
Is blossoming but to die!

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

"But you are rich enough, Lauson. Let us leave the great city, and seek some more quiet home."
"No, no, Lydia. Business is my very life; I must make a little more money before I give it up."
"Will you tell me, my husband, how much you would have now, if you were to settle your business all up?"
"O, perhaps two hundred thousand dollars."
"And think, Lauson, only think how sumptuously, we could live upon the interest of that, and have much, too, to bestow upon those who need our charity. Come, tell me that you will leave your business at once. I can see what you do not see. You are undervaluing your constitution, and your health is fast leaving you."
"Pshaw, Lydia, you croak like a raven. I should lose my health were I to leave my business. Don't say any more now, for you see I am busy."
As the husband spoke, he turned to the little ebony escrivoir which he kept in his parlor, and commenced overhauling and studying the various papers which lay there.
Lauson Watkins had seen his thirtieth year, and young as he was, he had become what the world calls rich. At an early age he had entered the mercantile business, and fortune had smiled upon him. He had already amassed an abundant competency; but while he had been doing this, he had been losing his health. His organization was one of those which will not bear great mental excitement. His brain was large and active, his excitability intense, and his mind easily worried and tortured; and, on the other hand, his physical constitution was slight, and of a highly nervous temperament. For years he had applied himself to business without taking any respite, and the faster money came in upon him, the more and nervous did he become in his labors. Night and day he labored over his shipments and invoices, and gradually but surely the joy of health was departing from him.
Poor Lydia Watkins saw all this. She saw the fearful disease marks that were growing upon her husband's countenance, but she could not persuade him to feel as she felt. He laughed at her fears, and yet, while he laughed, he felt the disease gnawing at his vitals. As the merchant sat there at his work, his anxious wife watched him with painful interest. His face was pale in the extreme, and the blue veins stood staringly out upon his high white brow and temples. His eyes were large and brilliant, but their brilliancy was not natural—it was false, nervous light that gleamed there. As he poured over a complicated invoice, reducing to his own currency large amounts of foreign money, his long, white fingers worked nervously through his hair, and his wife heard him breathe hard. O, she knew that he

When at a late hour Watkins arose from his task, he complained of a headache; but he had cleared ten thousand dollars by the cargo he had been disposing of, and he was pleased. That ten thousand did not help to give him content—it only helped to spur him on to renewed exertion.
"Lydia," said Mr. Watkins, after he had cleared his escrivoir, "have you seen your uncle Langrave to-day?"
"No."
"I am afraid he is going rather deeply into dangerous speculations. For a week past I have been endorsing papers for him to a considerable amount. He helped me without stint when I commenced business, and I suppose I must help him now; but I hope he will be careful."
"Adam Langrave is a careful man," returned Lydia, "and I am sure he would not do that which would make you suffer."
"O, no, I don't think he would," said Watkins; and here the conversation dropped, for the young man's mind became buried in his business.
Adam Langrave was an old man, and had been the foster father of Lydia. The girl had been left an orphan at an early age, and her husband had commenced his career as Langrave's clerk, and thus he became acquainted with the fair, virtuous girl whom he made his wife. Langrave had lately entertained a great project for making money, and it was in pursuance of this that he had called on Watkins for assistance.
On the day following the scene described, Mr. Langrave called at Watkins' store, and opened to the young merchant more fully his project. It was a vast one, promised a golden harvest, and after much deliberation, Lauson entered into it. It looked feasible to him, and he promised himself a rich return for his venture.
"Lydia, I am a ruined man!"
This was the exclamation of Lauson Watkins, as he entered his parlor one evening about a fortnight after his interview with Langrave. He was paler than usual, and every nerve was shaken with agitation. "Ruined!" repeated his wife. "He has entirely, completely sunk. Every cent is gone!"
"But you are not all lost. Something can be saved."
"No, no-dollar. Fool that I was, I went in with him to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars. I trusted to his honor."
The young man did not finish the word. He was excited, but he had judgment enough not to hurt the feelings of his wife by speaking harshly of her uncle. He was for the while completely prostrated. The blow had come upon him with a crushing weight and he felt it keenly.
The gentle wife moved to her husband's side and placed her arm about his neck. She trembled violently, and it was with difficulty that she could speak.
"Do not blame my uncle too much," she murmured. "Everything is not lost. I am left to you, and will do all I can to help you. In your business trials I could not assist you, but in your life trials you shall find that I am not useless. Do not despair, dear Lauson—something may turn up to assist you."
The young man did not speak. He returned his wife's embrace, and that moment she saw more of real, grateful joy in his eye than she had seen there before in months.
At the end of a week the young merchant's business was settled up, and he found himself the possessor of just the amount of personal property that the law allowed him. Everything had been swept away—every cent. Yet there was one thing that remained within his grasp—his wife held by her own right a small farm in the country. It was her birth place—the place of her childhood—and her uncle had secured it to her in such a manner that no misfortune of her husband's could ever fall upon it. Lydia begged of her husband to find a home on that farm. He hesitated a moment and then consented. He had at first thought of procuring a clerkship, and trying once more to set himself up in business. But the way looked tedious to him—it seemed too hard to gain the place from which he had fallen, and he gave it up. It was too much for his pride to occupy a menial position now, and he turned away from that great city weary and sick at heart.
The home that Lauson Watkins now received at his wife's hands, was in truth a lovely home. The farm was an excellent one, bearing the choicest of fruit, and capable of the most productive cultivation.—The dwelling was a sweet little cottage, surrounded by great elms, with cherry and plum trees in front, while at a distance, sparkling like silver in the sunlight, lay a lakelet, into which scores of babbling brooks poured their crystal tributaries. Lydia sold her costly jewelry, and thus realized enough to purchase a choice stock for the farm, besides having enough left to hire a trusty man to take charge of the grounds.
While Watkins was taking this step, Adam Langrave went south, but where, no one knew save himself.
It was in early spring, when the fallen merchant moved upon the quiet farm, and the work must soon begin. He was not a man that could remain idle, and he took hold to help his men to do the work. It was new to him, but he found it by no means disagreeable. His appetite grew sharp, and he began to have a keen relish for his food. The milk which came from his own cows tasted sweet to him. And then to see his little wife making butter and mixing bread, all with her own hands—it was novel to him, but possessed a charm that was grateful. Then he saw his children—a girl and a boy—playing upon the green sward in the garden, and he knew that they were growing healthier. By and by he set his children to studying, and he himself heard them recite their lessons.
Before winter set in, the ex-merchant had become a real farmer. His crops had been good, and he experienced a strange pleasure in realizing that he had gathered into his garner more than provision enough for the year to come.

devoted wife when she saw her husband thus returning to himself. The bloom of health was again on his cheek, his step was firm and elastic, his spirits were buoyant and free, and his soul had become contented in his home.
Three years passed away, and the pale, trembling, feverish merchant, had become a stout, healthy, rugged man. His home was the abode of every joy—a heaven upon earth.
It was in the evening, Mr. Watkins had heard his children recite their lessons and say their little prayer, and their mother had blessed them and attended them to their beds. They had just set down alone, the husband and wife, when some one wrapped at the door. Lauson arose and opened it, and Adam Langrave entered the apartment. Lydia sprang to the old man's embrace, and she wept tears of joy to see her kind uncle once more.
Langrave looked about him with something like surprise depicted upon his countenance, and as he shook hands warmly with Lauson, he seemed almost doubtful about trusting his own senses. Could it be possible the dying merchant had become such a living man? The change was to him more surprising than it was to Lydia, for she had watched each slow development of returning health, but he saw it all at once. It was in truth, a wonderful change.
Quick did Lydia prepare a simple repast for her uncle, and then old times were talked about. Lauson told how he had succeeded on his farm, and Langrave told where he had been in the south. The evening wore away pleasantly and agreeably. At length the old man remained silent for some moments, and Lydia began to tremble.
"Lauson," said he, "how would you like to go back to the city, and enter into business again?"
"I couldn't do it," said the young man with a slight shudder.
"But I think I could raise money."
"No, no, I am not fit for a merchant. Mine is a constitution that cannot live by such business. O, I would not give up this sweet home for any establishment in the city. Ah, sir, I learned a great lesson when I came here—a lesson on life. I know that I should have been in my grave if I had remained in the city. I did not see it then, but I see it now. At first I thought the loss of my property was a calamity, but it was a blessing, a blessing in disguise. Look at us now and see if we are not happy—and," continued Lauson, with great animation, "to-morrow you shall see my children. You will have to rise early if you would hear their first shout of joy and see their first smile of gladness."
"Thank God, Lydia," murmured the old man as he turned towards his niece, "your plan has been blessed."
Lauson Watkins gazed first upon his wife and then upon her uncle. He was puzzled. His wife caught his gaze, and with a convulsive movement sprang towards him and threw her arms around his neck.
"Oh, forgive me, my husband; forgive me," she exclaimed, while the tears streamed down her cheeks.
"Forgive you? for what? What does this mean?" gasped the young man as he discharged his wife's arms from his neck and looked into her face.
"Why, said Adam Langrave, "she wants you to forgive her for saving your life! Sit down, Lydia, and I'll tell you all."
The wife sank into her chair, and then the old man resumed:
"I'll explain the whole mystery to you in a few moments, Lauson. You know how deeply you had become absorbed in harrassing business, and how unceasingly you devoted your time to the mere acquirement of money. Your wife saw that you were losing health and strength, that you were becoming entirely lost to her and her children, in the mazy depths of money making. This latter burthen she could have borne without a murmur, but when she saw that you were surely making your way prematurely to the grave, she thought to arrest your steps. She told you her fears, but you heeded them not. She saw that the hand of the destroyer was upon you, and that you only plunged the more deeply into the fell excitement that was killing you. In the extremity she came to me, and begged of me to assist her in saving you. I knew of but one way, and I told my child of that. She made me promise I would carry it into execution. It was a severe task, but I determined to perform it. I drew all your money away from you, and when I knew that I had your last dollar in my possession, I pretended to fail. When I saw your misery upon the occasion, I was tempted to disclose to you the plot, but I resolved that I would go through with what I had commenced; at the same time earnestly praying that it might all end for your benefit."
"And now," continued the old man, drawing a heavy package from his breast pocket, "the deception has lasted long enough. Here are two hundred and three thousand dollars. I took them from you to save your life, and make my dear child happy. I return them to you, believing you will not blame