

rison, youngest child of Rufus and Martha Morrison. The eldest son and daughter having married and set up homes for themselves, only Milly was left at home to help mother with the farm work.

One midsummer afternoon, as the two sat busily sewing, Mrs. Morrison looked up and said: "Everybody is saying, Milly, that you have refused John Armstrong. Is it true, dear?"

"No, mother," said Milly, with a smile, "he refused me."

"Why, what do you mean, child? Of course, you didn't propose to him?" questioned her mother.

"Oh, no. He asked me first, but when I mentioned my terms he refused me or my terms, I don't know which."

"You talk in riddles, Milly. I really can't see any reason why you should not marry John; you know he thinks a deal of you."

"Why mother mine, it wasn't my fault. I just asked John what he was going to give me for my share of the farm work. I told him if I did half the work I thought I ought to have half the profits, and he got mad, that's all. Oh, I never shall forget his face," and she ended with a peal of laughter.

"Milly, Milly," cried her mother in surprise, "where did you get such ideas?"

"Mother," said Milly, seriously, laying aside her work and seating herself at her mother's knee, "I got them right here in our everyday experience. Think of how you and I have slaved every day of our lives, and then tell me what compensation we have. Look at this house. Are there a dozen articles of luxury in it? Look at the clothes we wear. Are they much better than the poorest people in town wear? Do we ever have any money to spend for our own pleasure? Is there a book or magazine or picture that we are ever able to buy? Now, mother, don't stop me. I am not going to say a word against father. I've no doubt he's as good as most men. But if you think it's right to slave day in and day out for your board and clothes (and poor ones at that) I don't. I've heard you say many times you'd sooner go with barely clothes enough to keep you warm than ask father to give you the money. And you know, mother, it takes me a week to get up my courage to ask him for a new dress. I feel as if I were facing the judge of a criminal court. Now, mother, confess that you think these things are not right."

"Yes, Milly," answered her mother, wiping away the persistent tears, "I have felt this injustice all my life. Your father seems to think that, hard as we work to help him make money, we have no right to any of it."

"No, I shan't soon forget the day, mother, when you asked him for a dollar and a half to buy your winter flannels, when he wanted to know if you wanted to spend all the money that was made on the farm in a year!" added Milly indignantly.

"Hush, Milly, hush! Remember, he is your father."

"I didn't forget that; but I've said nothing that isn't true. And now, mother, do you blame me for not wanting to put myself in such a position as that for the rest of my life? No," clenching her hand, "I'd rather live an old maid all my days with a little hard-earned money in my pocket and my sense of independence, than to be the wife of the richest farmer in the country, if I had to go to him like a trembling beggar for every little necessity." And, burning with indignation, Milly sprang from the room and "had it out" in the old cherry tree in the orchard.

The summer days waned. The September haze hung over the hills. The autumn leaves were falling, when late one afternoon as Milly was walking home from town, following the old familiar path by the river's bank, she came suddenly face to face with John Armstrong. She smiled and bowed, and would have passed on, but he put out a detaining hand.

"Aren't you going to stop and speak to me, Milly?" he asked humbly, as the color surged over his face.

"Why, John," she answered, gently, "I have always been willing to speak to you. You know it is you haven't wanted to speak to me since—"

"Since I made a fool of myself," blurted out John. Then he added: "Come and sit down here a moment, won't you? I want to set myself right with you."

When they were seated on the trunk of a fallen tree, he continued:

"I've thought it all over what you said to me that night, Milly, and I have come to see that there is a good deal of justice on your side. At first I couldn't see it, because, you know, I was blinded by prejudice and custom, and—tradition. But I finally came to look at it like this: You see, marriage between folks like you and me is a kind of partnership. Now, says I to myself, John Armstrong, you wouldn't go into partnership with any man, agree to do half the work, or work as many hours a day as he does and expect to get nothing for it except your board and clothes. You'd expect to get half the profits, wouldn't you? Well, then, says I to myself, let's put the shoe on the other foot. Now, if I was a woman, would I go into partnership with a man, and agree to do half the work and not get half the profits? Of course I wouldn't. Then thinks I, a woman has just as much right to what she earns as a man. There ain't any difference except in the kind of work. And so at last it came to me what a blame fool I had been and, why, what's the matter? Oh, don't cry, darling! Don't you see that it was all along o'loving you so much that made me come to look at it just as you do? And, if you'll only take me, Milly, love, I'll promise to give it all to you. I'll promise you anything if you'll only take me, Milly. Will you, dear?"

And who wonders that she did take him then and there into her tender, womanly heart.

The church bells were pealing one fair, sunny morning in late October, and there was a holiday look to the passers-by in Glenville town, for everybody was crowding into the little church to see John and Milly married. Speculation was rife. An air of mystery pervaded the usually slumberous community. An indefinable something was going to happen. At last suspense was ended, and down the aisle, proudly stepping, came bride and groom, with sunshine in their faces and sunshine in their hearts. But what are they doing? Where's the minister? What's the table for? And, for mercy's sake, what are lawyer Cobb and those other men doing with that paper? It looks like a will.

But all agitation was summarily quelled when lawyer Cobb, in his most diffusive oratorical style, read the following remarkable document:

Know all men by these presents, I, John P. Armstrong, being of sound body and mind, do this day, in the year of our Lord, 18—, and in this month of October, and 25th day of the same, enter into a civil contract of marriage with Millicent H.

Morrison. And I do hereby declare that our civil union shall be governed by strictly business principles, to wit: All money, personal and landed property, accruing to me after this date, as financier or business manager of the same, shall become the joint property of both parties in this contract, on condition that said Millicent H. Morrison faithfully performs a share of the labor necessary for the acquiring of said property. An equitable division of the same to be made yearly, reckoning from the date of this instrument.

In case of separation or divorce this contract shall be literally adhered to. In case of death the property shall revert to the remaining partner to the contract, or to his heirs-at-law, unless otherwise decreed. In witness whereof I hereby affix my hand and seal, this 25th day of October, 18—.

(Signed) JOHN P. ARMSTRONG, MILlicent H. MORRISON.

WITNESSES: Thos. Wiggins, William Brown, John Pettengill.

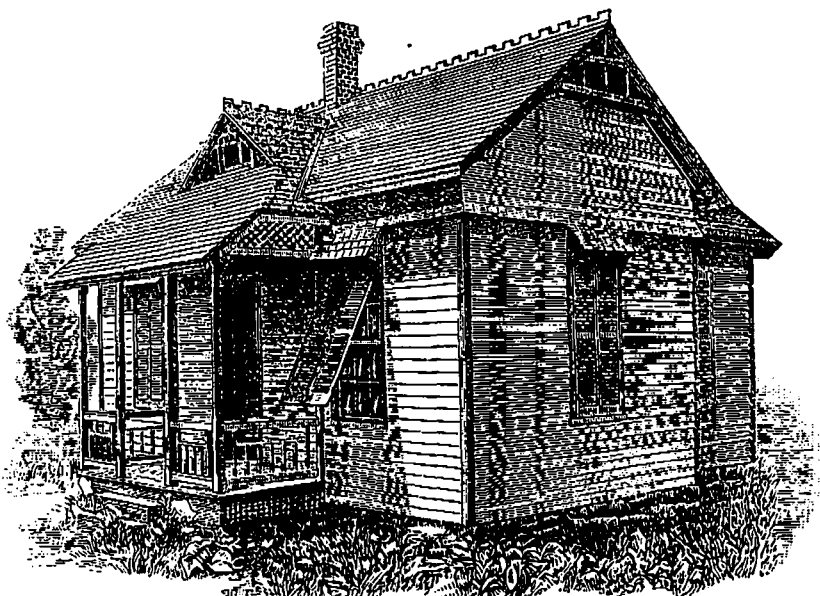
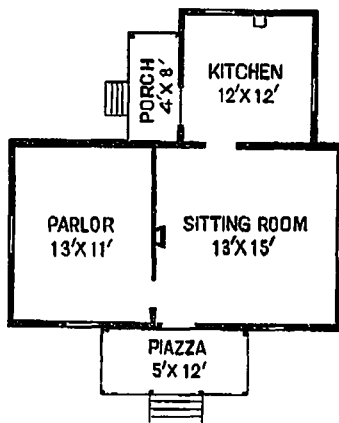
In breathless silence waited the wedding guests while the signatures were made. The civil service then being completed by the presentation of a copy of the document to both bride and groom, they turned to the altar to be made one by the man of God.

At last it was all over, and as Milly walked down the aisle she realized the consternation she had caused. A bomb-shell exploded in the midst of the sacred edifice could scarce have created a greater excitement than this. The telling of it spread like a prairie fire. One good mother of Israel was heard to declare to an eager crowd of listeners: "Wa! I allus thought Milly Morrison was queer, but now I'm certain on it, and (sententiously) if Bedlam don't reign in that house afore five years, then I don't know nothing about human natur!"

And so it came to pass that just as tourists abroad are pointed out the place famous in legend or history, strangers in Glenville are shown the little church where Milly Morrison signed her marriage contract.—*Pacific Rural Express*.

A Pretty Cheap Cottage.

HERewith we print the plan and illustration of a very pretty little cottage which the *Carpenter and Builder* says can be built for but \$400. The cuts show the building complete, and the ground floor. With designs such as this to assist, the farmer can make his home attractive with but a slight additional cost over a severely plain house. We believe the efforts of MASSEY'S ILLUSTRATED to present its readers with this and other designs for houses, barns, etc., which it purposes issuing later on, will be highly appreciated.



A FOUR HUNDRED DOLLAR COTTAGE.

The Unknown Painter.

MURILLO, the celebrated artist of Seville, often found upon the canvas of some one of his pupils unfinished sketches bearing the rich impress of genius. They were executed during the night, and he was utterly unable to conjecture the author.

One morning the pupils had arrived at the studio before him, and were grouped before an easel, uttering exclamations of great surprise, when Murillo entered. His astonishment was equal to their own, on finding an unfinished head of the Virgin, of exquisite outline, with many touches of surpassing beauty. He appealed first to one and then another of the young gentlemen, to see if they could lay claim to it; but they returned a sorrowful negative. "He who has left this tracery will one day be master of us all."

"Sebastian," said he to a youthful slave that stood trembling by, "who occupies this studio at night?" "No one but myself, senior." "Well, take your station here to-night, and if you do not inform me of the mysterious visitant to this room, thirty lashes shall be your reward on the morrow." He bowed in quiet submission and retired.

That night he threw his mattress before the easel and slept soundly until the clock struck three. He then sprang from his couch and exclaimed, "Three hours are my own, the rest are my master's!" He seized a palette and took his seat at the frame, to erase the work of the preceding night. With brush in hand, he paused before making the oblivious stroke. "I cannot, O, I cannot erase it!" said he; "rather let me finish it!"

He went to work. A little coloring here, a touch there, a soft shade here; and thus three hours rolled unheeded by. A slight noise caused him to look up. Murillo with his pupils stood around; the sunshine was peering brightly through the casement, while yet the unextinguished taper burned.

Again he was a slave. His eyes fell beneath their eager gaze. "Who is your master, Sebastian?" "Yon, senior." "Your drawing master, I mean?" "You, senior." "I have never given you lessons." "No, but you gave them to these young gentlemen, and I heard them." "Yes, you have done better; you have profited by them. Does this boy deserve punishment or reward, my dear pupils?" "Reward, senior," was the quick response. "What shall it be?"

One suggested a suit of clothes; another, a sum of money; but no chord was touched in the captive's bosom. Another said, "The master feels kindly to-day: ask your freedom, Sebastian!" He sank on his knees, and lifted his burning eyes to his master's face: "The freedom of my father!"

Murillo folded him to his bosom: "Your pencil shows that you have talent; your request, that you have a heart; you are no longer my slave, but my son. Happy Murillo! I have not only painted, but made a painter."

There are still to be seen in classic Italy many beautiful specimens from the pencils of Murillo and Sebastian.—*Selected*.

THE greatest question for man to consider is the one that relates to his duties to God; and if he holds this question subordinate to any other, he reverses the order of nature and of right reason, and puts himself in palpable conflict with the Bible. It is far more important that we should know God in all the respects in which He may be known than to know anything else. It is better to be a devout worshipper of the living and true God than to be a scholar in the earthly sense.—*Independent*.