

Choice Literature.

COALS OF FIRE.

"Thinks I, when Gran'marm Appleby dien, now Lorenzo 'n' Lucreshy'll make a match, for gran'marm was the one that kep' up the feud. She'd begin to talk about that piece of woodland, 'n' how Lucreshy's father tried to cheat 'em out of it, the minute Lucreshy come a-nigh: 'n' the very last time that she ever got up and prayed in meetin', she prayed that them that had tried to get their own relatives' propertty away from 'em might be brought to a better mind."

The latest news was being commented on over the fence which divided Mis' Isaiah Plummer's domain from that of Miss Seliny Wingate, the milliner. That portion of Miss Wingate's establishment which fronted upon the street was devoted to business, but her back yard was sacred to social intercourse and the exchange of strictly private opinions.

"I should 'most think that Lucreshy would have got right up 'n' prayed back at her," said Miss Wingate. "She's got spunk enough."

"The minister's wife said that Lucreshy was too good a Christian for that, but some thought 'twas because she wanted Lorenzo," said Mis' Isaiah.

"Like enough. There's a good many that wouldn't want him, though, he's such a terrible old bach. He won't let his hens out no time but Saturday afternoon, 'n' he won't eat a mite of victuals that ain't cooked jest so."

"Good land! I guess he'll get broke off that with that Scannell girl for a wife," exclaimed Mis' Isaiah. "Curls and hot biscuits, that's all there is to them Scannells. I shouldn't be a mite surprised if she didn't know how to make nothin' but saleratus bread."

"I wonder how he come to have her? You'd most think Lucreshy would have suited him better," said Miss Wingate, reflectively.

"Oh, she got round him; men is men," said Mis' Isaiah, sententiously. "She's nineteen, 'n' pretty-lookin', 'n' Lucreshy's thirty-five 'n' plain. That tells the whole story to them that knows men folks."

"He's a real villain, ain't he?" said Miss Wingate, with an appearance of satisfaction.

"Well, I don't know now as we'd really ought to say that," said Mis' Isaiah, with the superior air of one who is capable of taking a broad view of things. "I don't expect he ever give his word to Lucreshy. 'Twa'n't no more 'n' an understandin'. I shouldn't wonder if it kind of give a zest to it when they was young that they was forbid to speak to one another, 'n' maybe Lorenzo had a feelin' that 'twa'n't manly to give into gran'marm, 'n' and that made him stick to Lucreshy. Milkin' her cow, 'n' hoein' her garden sass, 'n' shovelin' her paths in winter is courtin' or it ain't, jest as it happens. She nussed him with the typhoid fever last winter, jest after gran'marm died; but then they was second cousins, and there wa'n't nobody else; and they do say he gave her two loads of dressin' for her garden, and had his hired man plant all her potatoes, so I guess that made 'em about square. Some would say that Lucreshy hadn't no great to complain of. It's hard for a girl that lets herself get to be an old maid dependin' on some man that don't mean nothin'; but very often she hain't nothin' but her own foolishness to blame. There's one thing certain, if Lorenzo's been to blame, he's in a fair way to get his come-upance. I thought maybe I'd jest step up 'n' see how Lucreshy was a-bearin' it, seein' she wa'n't to church nor prayer-meetin' yesterday. I thought 'twouldn't be no more'n neighbourly."

"Mis' Isaiah spoke with a certain hesitation, which seemed to invite her neighbour's view of the matter.

"You're one that could if anybody could," said Miss Wingate. "But I don't know as I should have the courage. Lucreshy ain't like some that you can get a nearness to."

"I ain't one to be scairt away from a Christian duty by a little oddity," said Mis' Isaiah firmly.

"Jest step round to the fence when you get back," said Miss Wingate, eagerly. "I shall be real interested to hear how she's took 't."

Half an hour later Mis' Isaiah was knocking at the door of a little spruce-gum-coloured house, which looked as if it had been dropped by accident in the middle of a straggling lane. There were patches of moss on the steeply-sloping roof, and an ancient well-sweep, which made the fresh spruce-gum paint look staring and frivolous. The house stood on a hill half a mile from the village, and its only neighbour was a large farm-house, bleak, but thrifty-looking. It was a near neighbour, with only an orchard intervening; but upon the top of the orchard wall a high board fence had been built, with an evident view to rigid separation; and in the middle of a family burying-ground in a stubby pasture a similar high board fence arose. The Phillipses and Parmenters, near of kin, but at war for generations, had not been willing to have their feud ended even by the great peace-maker, death. The only survivors of the two families who had remained upon the old places were now Lorenzo Phillips and Lucretia Parmenter, and it had been generally predicted that the feud would end in a wedding. Lorenzo and Lucretia had made friends over their spelling-books, and neither Gran'marm Phillips' frown—an awesome sight, for she was ninety, and her nose and chin met—nor the high board fence had availed to keep them apart. But in the matter of the wedding, fate had interposed—fate in the person of Eldora Scannell, from the Town Hill Settlement, with pink cheeks and yellow curls.

No one answered Mis' Isaiah's knock. Lucretia was in fact peeping through the blinds, but she would not open the door.

"I ain't a goin' to let folks in, let 'm say what they will. I can't bear it, nohow," she said to herself.

She was a small, trim woman, with an energetic step. Mis' Isaiah could hear her moving about: she could not keep still.

"They'll say I'm all broke down, but I ain't. I wisht I was. I'm b'ilin' with hate. I expect it's my Parmenter blood. And I wouldn't believe it was me—me that was always so forgivin'. I wisht I could keep on feelin' stunded, as I did at first. And yet when he fetched over the deed of that piece of woodland and wanted to give it to me for a dollar, I felt in my bones that something was a-comin'. I'd ought to have known when he said he was afraid gran'marm would appear to him if he took down the fence. I shouldn't wonder a mite if gran'marm threatened to appear to him if

he merried me. But folks are scairt sometimes jest because they're a mind to be. He'd have merried Eldora Scannell if the old Herry had riz up before him. I'd ought to have listened to mother. 'You're nourishin' a viper, Lucreshy,' she used to say; 'that greenish colour in his eyes ain't for nothin', and there wa'n't never a Phillips with a Roman nose that wa'n't tricky and treacherous.' I couldn't bear to hear nothin' against the Phillipses them, not even gran'marm, I felt so bad about the quarrel that was keepin' Lorenzo and me apart. I expect I was a fool; anyhow the fightin' blood has riz right up in me now. If there ain't Mis' Isaiah a-knockin' over there! Lucretia was peering through her closed blinds at the neighbouring house now. She could just see over the fence from her chamber window. "But see won't find nobody in the house. She's down in the field with him, a rakin' after; I see her yellor hair a-blowin'. There's pretty queer house-keepin' over there. I'll warrant now Abigail Dow has cleared out in a huff 'count of not bein' told he was goin' to get merried. I don't expect she can cook a meal's victuals half decent, and how Lorenzo'll get along with his dyspepsy—but there! I don't care if she pisons him. I wisht she would. Seems as if I hadn't a mite of grace left. But mebbe she wouldn't have got round him if he hadn't been mad with me about that woodland. I hadn't ought to have spoke right up and said I knew all the time that it belonged to us. She was hangin' round him down to camp-meetin', and to think he up and married her before he come home! It looked like spite."

Mis' Isaiah had not got in. She had gone her way after walking around the house and looking in at all the windows. She had had a long walk in the heat all in vain, but there was a certain mournful consolation in the fact that she could report that Lucretia was taking it hard. She wisht Lucretia well, although she had not let her in, but so great was the social stagnation in Corinth that a ripple must be made the most of.

A week went by, and Lucretia still remained in her darkened house, and friends besieged the door in vain. Glimpses of her had been seen going about her accustomed vocations, but even the minister, who called to enquire the reason of her absence from church and from prayer-meeting, where she was a bright and shining light, was forced to knock in vain.

"I've clean lost my hope," said Lucretia to herself. "I expect I was deluded. Anyhow when you hate folks sos' you wish 'em dead, you can't feel a go and testify. When I was afeard I wanted gran'marm to die, I used to wrastle and wrastle, but I can't now."

One day Lorenzo came, looking sheepish in spite of a manly effort. He had cogitated upon what he should say all the way along, and, in fact, for a long time before. He would reproach her gently for not coming to see Eldora; she was bashful, and the village folks looked askance at her as a Town Hiller. He would refer to the fact that, in spite of family differences, Lucretia and he had been "almost like brother and sister"; and he would say that the fences ought to come down. He felt a little thrill of relief as he reflected that she couldn't think that meant anything particular now. For a long time, in fact ever since he had begun to think that a long courtship was tedious, and that Lucretia was becoming middle-aged, he had taken great pains to avoid saying anything "particular"; and he congratulated himself upon the prudent mind which had kept him from any direct proposal of marriage. He even felt an unexpected sensation of gratitude toward gran'marm and her threats of ghostly vengeance. But the most prudent mind will not prevent a man from looking and feeling sheepish, and Lorenzo, as he walked away from Lucretia's closed door, was conscious of this infirmity.

Lucretia was touched by the sight of him, and gazed after him through a sudden rain of tears. "Lorenzo!" she called, pathetically, under her breath, almost in the manner of a stage heroine; although perhaps a homely old maid crying after her recreant lover would be found more laughable than patient upon the stage, human sympathy being so inevitably pitched to the false key of outward seeming. "I can't sense it anyhow," she murmured. "Why, Lorenzo and me bein' together is jest as nat'ral as breathin'. 'Twas all her! Men folks are kind of feeble-minded, the best of 'em, and she got round him. Land sakes! I remember once when I was ridin' with Lorenzo—he was fetchin' me home from the agricultural fair, and we had to come round by Town Hill for fear Gustavus would see us—'twas when Gustavus was to home—and I see that young one danglin' from a fence, and I says to Lorenzo that she was kind of pretty-lookin'. 'She'd look better if her face was washed,' says Lorenzo. 'There ain't nothin' pretty to me about them Town Hillers; they are a disgrace to civilization.' And now jest to think! What a dretful artful creatur' she must be! And how kind of machin' in he looked, and heart-broke, too! 'Twas all her fault, and seems as if something had ought to happen to her for it, but I don't expect there will—in this world."

(To be continued.)

FAMILY JARS.

Many otherwise happy homes are made places of perpetual discord by the ill-nature of the inmates. On whom the blame must generally rest we cannot say, but when it is said that "Mrs. So-and-So is a chronic growler," and that "she makes her husband's life a burden," some kind friend should suggest the use of Beecham's Pills. They will cure that headache, nausea, or impaired digestion from which the poor woman is suffering and which makes her so ill-natured. 25 cents a box. If your druggist does not have them, send to H. F. Allen Co., 365 and 367 Canal Street, New York.

IT IS A MISTAKE

To try to cure catarrh by using local applications. Catarrh is not a local but a constitutional disease. It is not a disease of the man's nose, but of the man. Therefore, to effect a cure, requires a constitutional remedy like Hood's Sarsaparilla, which acting through the blood, reaches every part of the system, expelling the taint which causes the disease, and imparting health.

A MAN'S own conscience is his sole tribunal; and he should care no more for that phantom "opinion" than he should fear meeting a ghost if he cross the churchyard at dark.—*Bulwer-Lytton.*

QUARTETS.

HABIT.

The sin confest to-day
To-morrow will repeat,
And even while we pray
Habit will conscience cheat.

SACRIFICE.

Achievement still demands
The same unchanging price
He dies with empty hands
Who makes no sacrifice.

MEMORY.

Thy tablets, Memory,
Hold all I would forget;
Ne'er shalt thou have from me
Incense or coronet!

DESPAIR.

Pity who doth aspire
And in despair doth grope
Pray that he lose desire
Or else recover hope!

LOVE.

Love is but selfishness
Spread out to take in two;
If each the other bless,
All in the world may rue.

—Matthew Richey Knight, in *The Week*

JAPANESE ART.

The original artistic capacity of the Japanese being conceded, it must be remembered that it is not uncommon to meet with families which have practised the same art for fifteen or twenty generations; and therefore heredity and habit must have added greatly to this capacity. The Japanese islands stretching themselves, as they do, throughout the north temperate zone, while surrounded by a sea penetrated by a tropical current, have a climate which invites out-of-door life, and offers varied natural phenomena, even including typhoons, snowstorms, eruptions, and earthquakes. Owing to the latter, the buildings are kept low, and are unobtrusive, not affording temptation for meretricious ornament; nor are there to be found any of the vulgar piles which blot a whole landscape. Thus the wealth of the old nobility was not wasted for lavish architecture, and could be spared for other forms of art, in which a large and widely distributed population was and is practically interested, each art-worker's family being a little centre of art education. The elaborate etiquette of the old imperial court and the rites of the temple gave employment to artisans, whose time was of so little money value, owing to the simple standards of living, that it could be freely used in perfecting their work. Theirs was the life which the genuine artist desires above all things; constant imaginative work, and direct contact with unspoiled nature, assurance of simple food and of shelter, and absence of anxiety; add to these intelligent appreciation of his work, and he may well be envied by kings and plutocrats. It may here be remarked that one important use of the wealthy would seem to be to foster the seedling art, usually for merely personal ends, though the day must come when it shall spread its roots far beyond such influence.—*W. Henry Winslow, in New England Magazine.*

SPECTRAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is unnecessary to remind our readers that the spectroscopy many years ago enabled astronomers to demonstrate that certain of the fixed stars are in a state of motion, either towards or away from the earth. The evidence supporting this conclusion was furnished by the displacement of the principal lines in the spectra of the different stars. A large number of spectral observations of all the leading fixed stars have been carried out in the Potsdam Observatory by Professor Vogel, in conjunction with Dr. Scheiner, for a considerable time past. The result of these observations went to show that the displacement of the spectral lines was subject to periodic variation. Professor Vogel and Dr. Scheiner came to the conclusion that this variation was due to the motion of the earth in her orbit, as she is at one time of the year approaching certain of the fixed stars, and six months later receding from them. This annual variation in the displacement of the lines was accurately measured, and from the data thus obtained the velocity of the earth in her orbit was calculated. The result arrived at agreed, within a few fractions of a kilometre, with the velocity as calculated from other sources. It would not, we think, be too much to say that no greater triumph of the scientific application of photography has been achieved within the year.—*British Journal of Photography.*

THE largest gold coin in circulation in the world is stated to be the gold "loof" of Annam, the French colony in Eastern Asia. It is a flat, round piece, worth about £65 sterling. The next in size to this unwieldy coin is the Japanese "obang," which weighs rather more than two ounces and a-half, about equal to ten English sovereigns.