

How little does

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### Abel Perry's Funeral.

Joshua Allen and me had visitors, along the last of the winter,—Abel Perry's folks from 'way out beyond Loontown.

They come in good spirits and the mornin' train, and spent three days and three nights with us.

You see, they wuz relations of ours, and had been for some time, entirely unbeknown to us, and they come a huntin' us up. They said "they thought relations ort to be hunted up, and hang together." They said "the idee of huntin' us up had come to 'em after readin' my book."

They told me so, and I said, "Wall." I didn't add nor deminish to that one "Wall." For I didn't want to act too backward, nor too forward. I jest kep' kinder neutral, and said, "Wall."

You see, Abel's father's sister in law wuz step-mother to my aunt's second-cousin on her father's side. And Abel said that "he had felt more and more, as years went by, that it wuz a burnin' shame for relations to not know and love each other." He said "he felt that he loved Josiah and me dearly."

I didn't say right out whether it wuz reciprocated or not. I kinder said, "Wall," agin.

And I told Josiah, in perfect confidence and the wood-house chamber, "that I had seen nearer relations than Mr. Perry's folks wuz to us."

Howsoever, I done well by 'em. Josiah killed a fat turkey, and I baked it, and done other things for their comfort, and we had quite a good time.

Abel wuz rather flowery and enthusiastick, and his mouth and voice wuz rather large, but he meant well, I should judge, and we had quite a good time.

She wuz very freckled, and a second-day Baptist by persuasion, and was pectin' up a crazy bedquilt. She went a-visitin' a good deal, and got pieces of the wimmen's dresses where she visited for blocks. So it wuz quite a savin' bedquilt, and very good-lookin' considerin'.

But to resoom and continue on. Abel's folks made us promise on our two sacred honors, Josiah's honor and mine, that we would pay back the visit, for, as Abel said, "for relatives to live so close to each other, and not visit back and forth, wuz a burnin' shame and a disgrace." And Josiah promised that we would go right away after sugarin'.

We wouldn't promise on the New Testament, as Abel wanted us to (he is dretful enthusiastick); but we gin good plain promises that we would go, and laid out to keep our two words.

So long a week or so after sugarin', Josiah beset me one day to go over to Mr. Perry's.

Josiah liked Abel; there wuz sunthin' in his intense enthusiastick nature and extravagant methods that wuz congenial to Josiah.

So I bein' agreeable to the idee, we set out after dinner, a-layin' out to be gone for two nights and one half day, and two parts of days, a-goin' and a-comin' back.

Wall, we got there unexpected, as they had come onto us. And we found 'em plumped into trouble.

Their only child, a girl, who had married a young lawyer of Loontown, had jest lost her husband with the typhus, and they wuz a-makin' preparations for the funeral when we got there. She and her husband had

come home on a visit, and he wuz took down bed-sick there and died.

I told 'em I felt like death to think I had descended down onto 'em at such a time.

But Abel said he wuz jest despatchin' a message, for us when we arrive, for, he said, "In a time of trouble, then wuz the time, if ever, that a man wanted his near relations close to him."

And he said "we hed took a load offen him by appearin' jest as we did, for there would have been some delay in gettin' us there, if the messenger had been despatched."

He said "that mornin' he had felt so bad that he wanted to die,—it seemed as if there wuzn't nothin' left for him to live for; but now he felt that he had sunthin' to live for, now his relatives wuz gathered round him."

Josiah shed tears to hear Abel go on. I myself didn't weep none, but I wuz glad if we could be any comfort to 'em, and told 'em so.

And I told Sally Ann, that wuz Abel's wife, that I would do anything that I could to help 'em.

And she said "everything wuz a bein' done that wuz necessary. She didn't know of but one thing that wuz likely to be overlooked and neglected, and that wuz the crazy bedquilt." She said "she would love to have that finished, to throw over a lounge in the settin'-room, that wuz freyed out on the edge. And if I felt like it, it would be a great relief to her to have me take it right offen her hands, and finish it."

So I took out my thimble and needle (I always carry such necessities with me, in a huzzy made expressly for that purpose), and I set down and went to pectin' up. There wuz seventeen blocks to piece up, each one crazy as a loon to look at, and it wuz all to set together.

She had the pieces, for she had been off on a visitin' tower the week before, and collected of 'em.

So I set in quiet and the big cheer in the sittin' room, and pieced up, and see the preparations a-goin' on round us.

I found that Abel's folks lived in a house big and showy-lookin', but not so solid and firm as I had seen.

It wuz one of the houses, outside and inside, where more pains had been took with the porticos and ornaments than with the underpinnin'.

It had a showy and kind of a shaky look. And I found that that extended to Abel's business arrangements. Amongst the other ornaments of his buildin' wuz mortgages, quite a lot of 'em, and of almost every variety. He had gin his only child S. Annie (she wuz named after her mother Sally Ann, but wrote it this way),—he had gin S. Annie a showy education, a showy weddin', and a showy settin'-out. But she had had the good luck to marry a sensible man, though poor.

He took S. Annie, and the brackets, and piano, and hangin' lamps, and baskets, and crystal bead lambrèques, her father had gin her, moved 'em all into a good sensible small house, and went to work to get a practice and a livin'. He wuz a lawyer by persuasion.

Wall, he worked hard, day and night, for three little children come to 'em pretty fast, and S. Annie consumed a good deal in trimmin' and cheap lace to ornament 'em. She wuz her father's own girl for ornament.

But he worked so hard, and had so many irons in the fire, and kep' 'em all so hot, that he got a good livin' for 'em, and begun

to lay up money towards byin' 'em a house, a home.

He talked a sight, so folks said that know him well, about his consumin' desire and aim to get his wife and children into a little home of their own, into a safe little haven, where they could be a little sheltered from the storms of life if the big waves should wash him away. They say that that wuz on his mind day and night, and wuz what nerved his hand so in the fray, and made him so successful.

Wall, he had laid up about nine hundred dollars towards a home, every dollar on it earned by hard work and consecrated by this deathless hope and affection. The house he had got his mind on only cost about a thousand dollars. Loontown property is cheap.

Wall, he had laid up nine hundred, and wuz a-beginnin' to save on the last hundred, for he wouldn't run in debt a cent anyway, when he wuz took voyalint sick there to Abel's: he and S. Annie had come home for a visit of a day or two; and he bein' so run down, and weak with his hard day work, and his night work, that he sunkumbod to his sickness, and passed away the day before I got there.

Wall, S. Annie wuz jest overcome with grief the day I got there, but the day follerin' she begun to take some interest and help her father in makin' preparations for the funeral.

The body wuz embalmed, accordin' to Abel's and S. Annie's wish, and the funeral wuz to be on the Sunday follerin', and on that Abel and S. Annie now bent their energies.

To begin with, S. Annie had a hull suit of clear crapo made for herself, with a veil that touched the ground; she also had three other suits commenced, for more common wear, trimmed heavy with crapo, one of which she ordered for sure the next week, for she said "she couldn't stir out of the house in any other color but black."

I know just how dear crapo wuz, and I tackled her on the subject, and says I,—"Do you know, S. Annie, those dresses of yourn will cost a sight?"

"Cost!" says she, a-bustin' out a-cryin'. "What do I care about cost? I will do everything I can to respect his memory. I do it in remembrance of him."

Says I, gently, "S. Annie, you wouldn't forget him if you wuz dressed in white. And as for respect, such a life as his, from all I see of it, don't need crapo to throw respect on it: it commands respect, and gets it from everybody."

"But," says Abel, "it would look dretful odd to the neighbors if he didn't dress in black," says he, in a skairful tone, and in his intense way,—"I would ruther risk my life than to have her fall in duty in this way; it would make talk!" And says he, "What is life worth when folks talk?"

"I would ruther risk my life than to have her fall in duty in this way; it would make talk!" And says he, "What is life worth when folks talk?"

I turned around the crazed block, and tackled it in a new place (more lunny than ever it seemed to me), and says I, mekankickly,—"It is pretty hard work to keep folks from talkin', to keep 'em from sayin' sunthin'."

But I see from their looks it wouldn't do to say anything more, so I had to set still and see it go on.

At that time of year flowers wuz dretful high, but S. Annie and Abel had made up their minds that they must have several flower pieces from the city nighest to Loontown.

One wuz going to be a gate ajar, and one

wuz to be a gate wide open. And one wuz to be a big book. Abel asked me what book I thought would be preferable to represent. And I mentioned the Bible.

But Abel says, "No, he didn't think he would have a Bible, he didn't think it would be appropriate, seein' the deceased wuz a lawyer." He said "he hadn't quite made up his mind what book to have. But anyway it wuz to be in flowers—beautiful flowers." Another piece wuz to be his name in white flowers on a purple background of pansies. His name wuz William Henry Harrison Rockyfeller. And I says to Abel,—"

To save expense, you will probable have the moneygram W. H. H. R.

"Oh, no," says he.

Says I, "Then the initials of his given names, and the last name in full."

"Oh, no," he said; "it wuz S. Annie's wish, and hisen, that the hull name should be put on. They thought it would show more respect."

I says, "Where Harrison is now, that hain't a goin' to make any difference," and says I, "Abel, flowers are dretful high this time of year, and it is a long name."

But Abel said agin that he didn't care for expense, so long as respect wuz done to the memory of the deceased. He said that he and S. Annie both felt that it wuz their wish to have the funeral go ahead of any other that had ever took place in Loontown or Jonesville. He said that S. Annie felt that it wuz all that wuz left her now in life, the memory of such a funeral as he deserved.

Says I, "There is his children left for her to live for," says I,—"three little bits of his own life, for her to nourish, and cherish, and look out for."

"Yes," says Abel. "And she will do that nobly, and I will help her. They are all goin' to the funeral, too, in deep-black dresses." He said "they wuz too little to realize it now, but in later and maturer years it would be a comfort to 'em to know they had took part in such a funeral as that wuz goin' to be, and wuz dressed in black."

"Wall," says I (in a quiet onassumin' way I would gin little hints of my mind on the subject), "I am afraid that will be about all the comforts of life the poor little children will ever have," says I. "It will if you buy many more flower-pieces and crapo dresses."

Abel said "it wouldn't take much crapo for the children's dresses, they wuz so little, only the baby's: that would have to be long."

Says I, "The baby would look better in white, and it will take sights of crapo for a long baby dress."

"Yes, but S. Annie can use it afterwards for veils. She is very economical; she takes it from me. And she feels jest as I do, that the baby must wear it in respect to her father's memory."

Says I, "The baby don't know crapo from a clothes-pin."

"No," says Abel, "but in after-years the thought of the respect she showed will sustain her."

"Wall," says I, "I guess she won't have much besides thoughts to live on, if things to on in this way."

I would give little hints in this way, but they wuzn't took. Things went right on as if I hadn't spoke. And I couldn't contend, for truly, as a had little boy said once on a similar occasion, "it wuzn't my funeral," so I had to set and work on that insane bedquilt and see it go on. But I sithed content and frequent, and when I wuz all