

was abreast. I involuntarily drew my reins, his face denoted suffering.

"Doctor Lane, my early friend, do not stop till you reach Mrs. Kendall's, my May lies there—sick, dying," he gasped, how sadly pale he was. My face blanched, I felt a singular kind of tremor; we dashed ahead neither stopping, and in fifteen minutes I stood by the couch of the young bride. That was an awful hour thus spent; at its close, I pressed down her white eyelids over her dull, glazed eyes—ah! thought I, how can such beauty be dead! And still for all, there was triumph at my heart—until I beheld the awful grief of the bereaved husband, saw the big drops like blood bead his broad white forehead; almost forced him from the inanimate body, that he would hold clasped to his bosom, kissing the white lips, the white cheeks, even the golden locks that laid damp and uncurled over her shoulders.

And when I left that house of mourning, was it not strange the calmness that I felt settling down over my spirit! Could this thought, even in its faintest tracery, swell through my mind at such a time—she is not mine, and neither is she his; I am glad that as she could not be mine only, none but death can claim her now! I fear, had conscience applied her torch, she would read those scathing words written on the crimson portals of my heart; but I must hasten.

The next day I went over to be present at the funeral services: and still I felt that sorrowful happiness. Poor Frederick was at times raving, then stupid with his great woe: the mourners assembled, the beautiful dead, laid robed in satin in her coffin, already the large parlor was filled with weeping friends. I took my station by the coffin; with unutterable tenderness I gazed upon that heavenly countenance it looked not like stern death but a soft, smiling slumber.

There were all her young companions around, village maidens, whose silvery voices wavered, and trembled, until tears and sobs choked down their music, and one mournful, heart rending wail sounded through the room.

The pastor arose and began his prayer: never heard I a more affectionate petition, how gently he spoke of her youth, her beauty and goodness,—the circumstance under which God, was pleased to call her—just as it were standing on the threshold of happy life, and looking through the rose-colored future. I still kept my place at the head of the coffin, my eyes full of tears, never once moved from that holy place.

I fancied the features grew dim, I thought my sight failed, and I bent close to the corpse. I drew back, wiped my eyes—looked again, God of mercy, what thrill sent a wild shock through my frame and smote my brain as with fire! I reeled! I fell almost over the coffin, there was moisture on the glass, moisture that came not off when I applied my hand; moisture upon the inside. My knees trembled, my heart beat against my side all my body swayed like a pendulum, all my serenity was gone, the voice of the pastor whistled in my ear; each moment was an hour, and yet I knew not what to do. The conflict came again—it was awful, awful; if I kept my silence she was still the bride of death, and as much mine as another's! If I spoke, she was again the wife of my rival. I dare not think of my emotions now—I could not have been myself when that horrible temptation beset me, and whispered me to let the dark grave claim her, if I might not. O! that was the great sin of life, I hope I am forgiven.

The perspiration welled out from every pore, but the agony was passed, I could have throttled the pastor that he did not cease—yet I feared for the very life of the poor husband, should he know the truth too suddenly; there was a tugging from my head to my fingers' ends; I shook like an aspen leaf.

"Amen!" oh, how I thanked God for that sound, I still clung to the coffin, I was weak, weak as a child.

It was the custom for the chief mourners to be called first, that they might be spared the shock of seeing the dear one borne out before their eyes. The poor husband tottered out, supported on each side, do you not think my feelings must have been singular, as he passed me I—next the sobbing mother. Now was my time, "friends, neighbours," I gasped, "call the sexton, take off the coffin lid, delay not a moment, she is not dead." I rather shrieked than said the last words.

O! such change as came over that assembly; many swooned—a crowd came rushing up to the coffin; I pressed between a crowd, the hand of the undertaker trembled: and as screw after screw fell rattling on the floor, my heart beat quicker with hope and fear.

The lid was thrown aside; in my arms was the fair

creature borne to her couch; as I returned a moment, I saw her only sister standing as if riveted to the floor; her cheeks ghastly, her eyes staring frightfully. I seized her by the arm, but she started not, I shook her rudely saying, "Unless you help me, Maria, she may perhaps really die," quick! come and cut off her grave-clothes! she must not see them—must not know of this!"

With a wild, unnatural burst of laughter, the girl aroused herself from her stupor; then as suddenly, a flood of tears came to her relief; all was right now; she followed me into the next chamber, and cutted the white satin ribbons from the delicate wrists, and unloosed the linen bands on the breast, so that by the time the young bride opened her eyes, she was lying as if she had sought her couch for pleasant slumber.

And now the terrible excitement over, I breathed freely; and yet another important task was to be accomplished; by my orders the poor husband had been briefly informed that the ceremony would be detained for a moment, he was so distracted with his grief that all news was alike to him—they led him where they liked, he sat in a little room just across the entry. I went in, closed the door and stood beside him; he glanced up once, then buried his face in his hands with a deep, unearthly groan, that went to my very soul, oh! I felt for the first time such exquisite joy in the performance of a good deed—I experienced a new love for my profession.

"Frederick," said I, placing my arm around his neck, "Frederick, there is some good yet in store for you, do not mourn this way."

"I am a broken-hearted man," he uttered in faltering accents, "do not strive to comfort me—you only increase my misery."

"But if I could give you comfort you little dream of; if—if I told—you—" I stammered, and knew not how to proceed, for the husband's wild eyes were fastened to my face, while he half rose with a strange quick movement.

"If what—if what, Doctor Lane?—what am I to think?" his voice trembled, "there is something in my heart bid me look to you for hope? Yet why, why!" and the words sank mournfully into silence.

"Did you ever hear of people falling into trances, and then when robed for the burial—"

I could proceed no farther, the excited man sprang from his seat, clenched both my hands, and with fire in his eyes, incoherently exclaimed—"What!—how!—dead!—in a trance!—laid out!—buried!—shut up!—alive!—alive!—You do not tell me that she—my May, whom I saw die—whom I gasped in my arms—on this bosom—bade me farewell—grew white and cold—no, no, you mock me!"

"Frederick," said I, while the tears rained down my cheeks, "your wife still lives—she was only in a trance."

Never shall I forget the ensuing scene, he threw his arms around me, and hugged me like one frantic.

"God bless you! Heaven bless you! Oh! doctor, I shall die of this excess of joy! lead me to her, where is she, my friend, my good friend! May May, my sweet bride—not dead—not dead! when these eyes looked upon her for the last time! Oh! but no, doctor—this is too beautiful, too good—let me see her, I will be calm, and, doctor, he exclaimed, grasping my arm with his shaking fingers, "I would almost give you my life for this, I would, I would, I could not have survived long you cannot tell how dearly I loved her. Dear doctor, God bless you!"

He did not even dream poor fellow that he had been my rival.

The mother hung over her child—the husband bent over his bride—full of thanksgiving, she, with her large blue eyes moving fondly from one to the other, as she whispered, "I am better, stronger, I shall soon be well again, I have been sick very long, have I not?"

Frederick kissed her pure brow in reply, and then hid his face in the pillow, to weep in silence, and then I left them, a happier being, a better man, and happier and better I have been ever since.

May and her husband still live—a fond beautiful pair, even now.

I am an old bachelor.

The face of truth is not the less fair for all the counterfeit wizards that have been put upon her

Witty sayings are as easy lost as the pearls of a broken string, but a word of kindness is seldom spoken in vain. It is a seed which, even when dropped by chance, springs up a flower.

## THE VALUE OF A CENT

A little thing to write about you may say, but trifling as it may make and mar our fortune: then, are they not important enough to be noticed!

Suppose a child were starving in the streets—what then! Why, a penny would buy him bread enough to recruit his dying energies. Depend upon it, a cent, properly disposed, may, at certain times, do more good than a million at others.

A friend of ours, was returning once through a busy thoroughfare to her home. Her intention was not to purchase anything, and she happened to have in her purse but one cent. Passing by a little stand, she saw some very small rich-looking oranges for sale at a penny apiece. She spoke for one, took the cent from her pocket, when suddenly a thought arrested her, she could not help it, but involuntarily stayed her hand, it was this "I have just left a luxurious table, I have had all I wanted, how foolish in me to spend even this cent, when I may come across some poor beggar child to whom it may be a treasure." She replaced the cent and went her way.

A long distance was before her, but as she came to the head of a narrow alley, she paused for a moment, something seemed to draw her irresistibly towards the place; she knew a poor widow who lived there, a lady—woman, who supported by her own industry, and she thought she might just look in upon her for a moment, to ascertain if she was comfortable.

The widow was sitting by a small fire, her five children ranged around the hearth, as she entered; the former made her welcome, but in subdued tones; and our friend saw she had been weeping. With great delicacy she inquired the cause.

"To tell you the truth Mrs. M.," said the widow, while her cheek crimsoned, "I have today spent my last farthing for bread for these children; and though I have work my money was advanced, and I cannot get more till it is finished to-morrow. My oldest boy came running home a few moments ago from the upper part of the city, saying that a letter was in the postman's box, with my name upon it, and the name of my native town. It may be of the greatest importance, but I am a stranger in this neighborhood, I don't like to expose my poverty by borrowing, and yet I have not one cent."

"And I am sorry to tell you that one penny is all I have at present," said our friend; "but that will enable you to get what you wish, and I hope you will find good news in it."

The letter was sent for. It was written by her father's sister, a good and pious woman, and a dependent. She begged her to come to her early home, from which her father had long ago expelled her, for marrying a poor man; the old gentleman was dangerously ill, might die any moment, he had spoken of her, he seemed to feel kindly towards her, and if she could hasten there, his forgiveness might be obtained, and she and her five children made comfortable.

There was no time to be lost, on foot and alone the widow set out, travelling, secure in her poverty, at weary miles.

By midnight, her feet for the first time in twelve years pressed upon the threshold of her father's princely mansion. The good aunt met her with tears. Tired and travel-worn as she was, she yearned to behold her old father before he died, she hurried to his chamber blind to his bedside, and without speaking fell upon her knees, beseeching only his forgiveness, his blessing. How could the demon of vindictiveness longer rule in the dying man's heart? He looked upon the hollow, grey-worn cheek of his surviving child, and forgot the past; he held forth his feeble arms, and she fell upon his bosom.

The old father died with the dawn, but not before he had affixed a codicil to his will, making his child and her children heirs to most of his large estate, and to-day the poor shirt-sewer, who was stitching herself into the grave, lives, beloved and respected by rich and poor, her children, well educated, promise to become blessings and honors to her. Upon her mantle in the best room is a gilded and transparent vase, containing one cent, and she often reminds her friend, that through the instrumentality of so trifling a sum she became enabled to do all the good for which hundreds of hearts bless her daily.

So you see, reader, that a penny is sometimes of great value.—*Oliver Branch.*

Do good with what thou hast or it will do thee no good.