

The Standard.

VOLUME 12

NUMBER 29

OR FRONTIER AGRICULTURAL & COMMERCIAL GAZETTE.

Price 12s 6d in Advance

SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 1845.

[15s. at the end of the year]

Kate's Disappointment.

From Author's Magazine.

BY MISS M. S. HUNT.

Mr. and Mrs. Ross sat alone over a late tea table. The children had been taken to bed, and if their parents had been so minded, they might have well enjoyed themselves. But such was not the case, although everything around gave evidence of comfort and plenty. A fire in the grate, of Liverpool coal, crackled and blazed, the very personification of cheerfulness. A fine old arm chair stood waiting for an occupant, but Mrs. Ross sat upright and determined at the head of the table. The astral lamp, that shed its light so softly upon her countenance, did not reveal a very soft expression. Her brows were knit, her flashing black eyes bent in stubborn thought, and her mouth was drawn down at the corners, a deplorable sign to her husband. He, too, looked very ill-natured. He glanced at her sullenly, once in a while, from under his eyebrows, then moved his lips quickly, with a vexed, impatient expression. At last he struck his hand down upon the table, powerfully.

You had better break all the dishes, hadn't you? I inquired his spouse, with a nervous start. Then she relapsed into silence again.

Jane, exclaimed Mr. Ross, I tell you, you must give Betsy up. You don't need her to take care of those children. Not a bit. You know I've been fixing up my store, and I have expenses enough. I'm not going to pay out eight dollars a month to that girl, for doing nothing. You must give her up!

I won't give her up, and there's an end of it. You may talk till your head is grey, it will do no good. Give her up indeed. To treat you often to oyster suppers, I suppose. No, no, you don't impose upon me, in this manner, I can assure you. Do you think I'm going to slave myself to death with the children—to wear my very life out—to deprive myself of every pleasure, and you off sleigh riding and the deer, know what, till two or three o'clock in the morning? No, no! I won't do it, and you may as well stop talking about it, first as last, for you won't move me.

You may see the time when you will repent this madman, said her husband, from between his ground teeth. If that girl isn't dismissed at the close of the week, I'll never pay her a cent afterwards, if she stays until doomsday. I've tried persuasion, means to induce you to give her up, and I found there was no use in it. Now, if you keep her, pay her as you can. I will have nothing to do with it.

Mrs. Ross was proud, passionate, and selfish. Her moral feelings were like a wilderness, that had never been cultivated. Yet when in a good temper, or rather when she wished to appear well, there was a brilliant vivacity about her, that charmed all, except very keen observers. Her dark eyes sparkled, her clear complexion flushed delicately, and her laugh broke forth, with all the apparent lightness of a young girl. She was a favorite generally, wherever she went. She read every new novel that came out, good, bad, and indifferent; her memory was retentive, her language ready and copious. She was one of those persons, who seem to have an intuitive perception how to interest, and adapt themselves to others. She was fond of admiration in society; though she sent forth but little affection from her own heart, she wished to be the idol in the circle of her friends. Yet, as is frequently the case in her own home she was the reverse of everything that can win esteem.

When her husband ceased his angry speech, she made no reply. He was not remarkable for putting his threats into execution, and she knew that he was well aware of her often proved obstinacy. She, therefore, indulged a firm hope, that he would give way to her, as usual. A smile of derision passed over her lip, for a moment, then vanished. She rose from the table, and after ringing a bell for the servant to come and remove the tea things, she seated herself in the arm chair, and began to sew. Mr. Ross with a determined frown, took up his hat, left the room, and slammed the door behind him in a very undignified manner. Another smile slightly displayed the white, even teeth of Mrs. Ross.

Pshaw! sir, Betsy leaves the house about as soon as I do, said she to herself, rather to her husband, after he had gone. Mr. Ross traversed the streets with quick, firm steps. His lips were compressed, his face almost white with anger.

The girl shall go, if it is only to provoke her, he muttered. I'll die before I will give over. Yes, yes, I'll see if I can't make my threats good, and more than good for once. She shall not remain in the house an hour after Saturday. I'll tell her myself to-morrow, to prepare her for it. The husband thus gave vent to his angry thoughts. Saturday evening came: Mrs. Ross had not uttered a word to Betsy about her dismissal. Her surprise was therefore great, when the

girl came in, with bonnet and shawl on, to bid her good bye.

Where are you going, Betsy? she inquired, glancing at her husband.

I am going to leave, madam, was the brief answer.

But I have not given you my dismissal. You, of course must know that domestic affairs depend upon me. Take off your things, and remain. Mrs. Ross spoke in a voice tolerably calm, though her eye betrayed the smothered anger within her. She thought her husband's pride, would prevent him from entering into an altercation before a servant, and thus her object would be gained. Take off your hat, Betsy, she repeated, as the girl hesitated, with burning cheeks, and looked at Mr. Ross for directions.

You must go, Betsy, said Mr. Ross in a decided voice.

Would you turn the friendless creature into the street at night? asked the wife, starting from her chair, passionately. I tell you, she shall not go. Close the door again!

She is provided for, Mrs. Ross, returned her husband, glancing sharply at her, while holding the door, for the egress of Betsy. Then turning to the half-frightened girl, who by this time stood in the hall, he said in a more gentle tone—You have been a good, faithful girl, Betsy, and I have recommended you as such. Continue to be honest, and good tempered. Don't forget the number of the house. Good bye.

When he turned to look at his wife, after closing the door, she was sitting in a chair, sobbing violently. She had regarded her triumph with a certain, and now her modification was extreme. She was too highly excited to utter a word. After the lapse of a half an hour, during which time, Mr. Ross had held the newspaper upside down, pretending to read, his wife raised her head, and said angrily, if you don't provide me with a servant for the children, I'll sponge on my acquaintances, as sure as I live, I will.

Mr. Ross could hardly restrain a smile, at the telegenic language she employed. Anger made her totally regardless of the manner in which she spoke, if she only conveyed her meaning forcibly.

Whom do you intend to sponge on, my dear? he inquired, in a smooth, provoking tone.

I'll get Kate Fisher to spend two or three weeks with me, and help to take care of the children. She'll be willing enough to come, she thinks the world of me; a thousand times more than you do.

I presume you know the reason of that. She only sees your best side, while I have only a chance to see the worst.

Oh! exclaimed the wife, as if a sudden pang had shot across her heart. She covered her face with both hands, and burst into tears. That single sentence, awoke a thousand bitter memories. It stirred up thoughts of years gone by, when she was young, gay and beautiful, the idolized betrothed of Frederick Ross—when he turned to her, always with a joy kindling eye—when to listen to her voice, laden with the low words of newly-awakened love, was his only happiness—then she was to him a perfect woman. What was she now? Her heart shrunk as she asked the question, and her choking sobs grew heavier, as she could only reply, I never thought, my conduct could turn him away from me entirely. My unrestrained passions have ruined me! These thoughts lasted not long. The general state of feeling soon returned. The once strong affection between Mr. and Mrs. Ross had not abated suddenly. It was only by degrees, as their characters were acted out, as they opposed each other, and neither would yield, that anger was excited—and when the excited, each fell in the estimation of the other. After one quarrel, a thousand more, flowed like streams from a fountain. The temple of love had received a rude shock. Its lovely outside ornaments were fretted and worn away, and soon its interior beauties were defaced and destroyed. True, deep, holy love was gone.

Mr. Ross had resolved to invite Kate Fisher to spend some time with her. One bright afternoon in the following week, she presented herself at the front door of a plain two story house. Her summons was answered by Kate herself, a sensible, gay young creature of seventeen.

Oh, how do you do, Kate, dear, exclaimed Mrs. Ross gaily, as Kate caught her hand, and kissed her, with a warm-hearted laugh of pleasure, saying Now you're real good. Mrs. Ross not to pass over humble domestic, when you have so many fashionable friends, drawing you away in different directions.

Why, Kitty, I never forget the friends of ancient days, do I? inquired Mrs. Ross, tapping her young friend laughingly under the chin. You know your mother and mine were very intimate, so we have a claim upon each other, although you have never made me more than afternoon visits.

And you have never made me more than a call at a time, answered Kate, looking archly in Mrs. Ross's face, as she led her to the

parlour, with her arm flung around her waist.

Oh! we married ladies are to be excused for everything. We have such an abundance of cares.

So you have, I pity you from the bottom of my heart. I had an offer from an old bachelor the other day; don't you think I had better refuse him? I know he would be laid up with the gout whenever I wanted to go out visiting. I have a presentiment of it, a vague, shadowy something.

Kate, what nonsense, are you rattling about now? exclaimed her mother, entering the room at the moment, and saluting Mrs. Ross.

I was only remarking about some shadowy presentiments I have sometimes, replied her daughter with a gay smile. Just to think of it, Mrs. Ross, mother positively discourages me about marrying Mr. Hodgekins. I say all I can about his good qualities. I tell her he doesn't smoke, nor chew, that he is rich, and will probably give me a handsome gold watch as soon as I am his blooming bride. His only fault is snoring in church; you know I can tread on his gony toes, and that will awaken his attention. I want some variety in my life!

What do you say of virtue of that kind? said Mrs. Fisher, turning to Mrs. Ross, with a smile.

I think Kitty would wish herself unmarried as soon as the honey moon had gone, replied the visitor, and you think so too, seriously, don't you, Kate?

Certainly I do! was the young girl's frank reply.

Mrs. Fisher, you must let Kate come and spend a few weeks with me; that will break the monotony she complains of," said Mrs. Ross.

So it will," cried Kate, starting from her seat with a lively, but she resumed it again, blushing at the eagerness, with which she was accepting Mrs. Ross's sudden invitation.

Well I don't know whether I can spare, Kate," said Mrs. Fisher looking affectionately at her daughter's bright countenance.

Oh! I came on purpose to get her to spend some time with me. I can't take dear Mrs. Fisher. I intend to bear her off this very afternoon; she'll be here!

I should like to be borne off," was Kate's answer, "but mother will decide of course."

"Well, I yield to the majority," replied Mrs. Fisher, "but I can't let her go until morning."

Morning it shall be then, rejoined Mrs. Ross.

Can't we persuade you to take off your hat and shawl, and to remain to tea? said Mrs. Fisher, urgently "if Kate makes you so long a visit it is no more than fair."

O do stay, Mrs. Ross, dear Mrs. Ross, joined in Kate. You shall eat some bread of my making. Let me see! what other inducement have we got? I don't know, but you will stay, won't you? and the lively creature busied her sunny fingers in waiting the visitors' bonnet. Mrs. Ross staid, and the afternoon glided by quickly. No one could be in the presence of Kate Fisher long, without feeling the sunshine of her frank young spirit. She was natural and artless as a child. She could not laugh or cry whenever it was proper; but when the quick, warm impulses of her heart dictated, no girl could gain the external self-command, so necessary in this world of ours. After Mrs. Ross had gone, a lamp was lighted, and Kate and her mother sat down by a little work stand, to sew.

Mrs. Ross is a delightful woman! said Kate breaking the silence of a few moments. She never comes here that she has not something interesting to tell us. I should think her husband would almost worship her; she is just like a young girl.

You must think young girls are very delightful, answered her mother, quietly.

Why, mother, said Kate, laughing, "I only mean that she is so fresh and lively;—these are the only respects in which she resembles young ladies of course she is more interesting than young girls generally, because she is more mature, and has had more experience of every kind, I hope, when I get to be thirty years old I will be like her. O, I love her so; how I should like to be looked upon as a pattern. Well there is no knowing what I may be when I get in years, Kate spoke half seriously, half jestingly, the last sentences.

You will never be a pattern for any one, daughter mine, replied her mother, laughing heartily. "Every one calls you a wild little hoyden now, that surely is not very promising."

But mother you now I am not always wild. Sometimes I think the gayest people are at times saddest.

You are seldom sad, Kate dear.

Very seldom, but when I find myself deceived in the people of this bright world, half its beauty is gone. I never was deceived except in my friend Lucy Prescott. How it aung me, to find her so selfish.

You will be probably be deceived many

times, dear, before this world will lose its brightness. But it is a narrow mind that judges all by a few. In a few years from this time, you will feel as if you had awakened from a dream. You will become more familiar with real life, and sometimes with a smile, sometimes with a tear, you will look back on your sweet romantic visions never realized. You will learn to look within, instead of without, for brightness. You will I hope, dear Kate, and Mrs. Fisher clasped her hand and looked tearfully in her earnest eyes.

You will, I hope, learn to regard this world as only the rugged pathway that leads up to Heaven."

"I hope, I do now, regard it as the pathway, but not as the rugged one, mother. I shall yet meet with many lovely places, before I leave it."

Yes, perhaps so, my child.

Oh! mother, how can we look out upon the green earth, with its sweet flowers, and overshadowing trees, upon the pleasant waters, without a thrill of joy. We cannot. And affection, too, Kate paused tremulously, and in a flood of sudden tenderness, leaned her head upon her mother's bosom and wept. With all her young, glad gaiety, she possessed the strong, yet delicate feelings of a true woman.

The next day, with a bounding heart, Kate kissed her mother "good bye," and left home for the dwelling of her dear friend, Mrs. Ross, she was greeted most cordially, the hours flew on rapid wings. Her hostess was lovely and interesting as usual. Mr. Ross was all kindness and courtesy. The children clung to her, and seemed to love her, just as she wished. She told them stories and took an interest in their amusements. When Mrs. Ross was otherwise engaged, she half unconsciously took all the care of them, her amiable friend designed.

Well, said Kate to herself, after she had retired to her chamber, at night, "I've spent a very pleasant day. The more I see of Mrs. Ross, the better I like her. She makes me so perfectly at home. But what a temper Ann has! I should think she was old enough to have it subdued a little. Her mother ought—but we can't expect people to be perfect. I suppose Mrs. Ross is so kind-hearted she has yielded to her feelings, and neglected to punish her. It is a fault, but an amiable one, certainly. All have their weaknesses. I'm sure I have a thousand. In this benevolent frame of mind, the young girl snuck into a pleasant sleep, from which she did not awaken, until daylight peeped between her window blinds.

Ah! Kate, good morning, exclaimed Mrs. Ross, as she entered the breakfast room. Did you rest well last night? Did my desire come to pass, 'pleasant dreams and slumbers light'?

O yes, I rested delightful, replied Kate. What a lovely morning we have!

Lovely! You must look as pretty as you can take a walk in Broadway this afternoon. I want let you loose your color for want of exercise.

I suppose I shall have the pleasure of your company, of course. I should take little pleasure in walking alone, without an object.

I should like to go with you very much. But I have no girl at present to take care of the children, so I am obliged to deprive myself of a great many pleasures, I am accustomed to.

You do it very cheerfully, said Kate, with an approving expression.

Mrs. Ross merely smiled very sweetly, in acceptance of the compliment. Kate took a stroll in Broadway, with one of her friends children, a bright little boy for a companion.

On the third day, as Kate sat on a low stool patiently trying to make a kite for little Henry, Mrs. Ross who was sewing in the arm chair, suddenly broke out, as if thinking aloud, "I'm in a dilemma. I don't see how I can get rid of going, without offending her."

Did you speak to me? asked Kate, looking up and brushing back her curls.

Did I speak my thoughts? said the lady, with an air of innocent bewilderment.

Why, yes, you must be absent minded, answered Kate, laughing.

I was thinking of an engagement, for this afternoon, that I don't now how to manage. Some time ago, I promised a friend of mine to visit some paintings with her, then return to her house, to take tea, and spend the evening.

Well, can't you go? Let me be mistress here, in your absence. I'll promise to gather up all my dignity, and flourish like a queen. The children will think I've grown three inches, if you delegate your power to me. I'll sit at the head of the table, and pour out tea without spilling. You see if Mr. Ross don't give a good account of me.

You are very, very fine indeed, but it seems too bad, to trouble you with the children.

Hurt my head, mother," sobbed the poor little fellow.

No, you haven't. If a would keep you still, I should be glad of it. Go up stairs."

"Ann told me to come and get a drink."

"She did, hey? well go up, and tell her

ple appear to prefer a little *rust*, when a straightforward way of dealing, would answer quite as well. Mrs. Ross wished to mortify her husband, and induced him to get a nurse for the children, by seeming to make a tool of her friend. This she knew, would grate on his feelings extremely. Sharp words, she found would not gain her purpose, she therefore resorted to art. Kate was left to perform the duties of a matron. In the evening she thought Mr. Ross was uncommonly still, and somewhat low spirited. She amused herself with a book therefore, and retired early. The next morning, she descended to the breakfast room later than usual. The door was ajar, and to her great surprise she heard angry voices in dispute.

But Jane, said Mr. Ross you surely don't think in this case, you did unto another, as you yourself would wish to be treated. Only admit this. Do you think so?

My thoughts are my own. I don't pretend to follow any straight jacket code of morals, retorted Mrs. Ross in a violent tone, that thrilled Kate's every nerve with sudden pain. She started back quickly, that she might no longer be a listener. With slow, unsteady steps, she mounted to her chamber, and when there locked the door. Sinking into a chair she leaned her head upon her hand. "I surely have not heard aright, she is not wolf in sheep's clothing. The disappointed girl broke out, giving vent to her bewildered thoughts. "How could she speak so? how could she?" For a quarter of an hour, Kate remained motionless and silent, then she shook her head sadly, and the bitter tears of disappointed feeling stole down her young face. I thought she was almost an angel, she sobbed, if I am deceived in her whom shall I ever trust? Oh, what a hard world this is. Poor Kate was startled from her unhappy thoughts by the breakfast bell. She had by this time concluded that Mrs. Ross might be warm hearted, though passionate. She washed away the traces of her tears, and with a tolerably composed visage appeared at table.

You look rather pale this morning, Miss Kate, was the salutation of her host.

I charge you not to get home sick, Kitty! said Mrs. Ross with a bright smile. But are you really ill, dear Kate? she continued, with something like concern in her voice.

No, I am not ill, replied the young girl, "but—"

But what? asked Mrs. Ross.

"I don't know what I was going to say," Kate answered, casting down her eyes, and feeling her cheek grow dreadfully red. She knew their eyes were upon her, and it deepened her color, and increased the heat of her system, until she began to suspect she was in a raging fever. The breakfast soon went on, however, but poor Kate was too much accustomed to acting precisely as she felt, to feel entirely at ease. Her gay remarks, and light hearted laugh were missed. Once she realized to reply to jesting observation made by Mrs. Ross. She tried very hard to laugh, but it died away in a faint, constrained smile.

"I'm sure you're not well, dear," said Mrs. Ross, to her young guest, about an hour after, as they sat alone in the parlour. "Tell what I can do for you perhaps you had better lie down awhile, you are so still—you couldn't be unless you were sick." Kate looked up, with a sweet, affectionate smile; her doubts were giving way; she judged others by her own warm, impetuous heart. "You are very kind," she said, rising, and taking the hand of her friend. "I will make a resting place of the sofa, no doubt I will be as noisy as ever, after a nap." To the sofa Kate went! adjusted herself in a comfortable position, with her face turned to the wall, not to sleep, but to think, without being obliged to talk. "She is an affectionate being," thought Kate, with something of remorse in her heart, for what she considered her harsh, and hasty judgement. Mrs. Ross flung a heavy shawl over her, that she might not take cold; then stooped, and kissed her softly, whispering "Pleasant slumbers, dear Kate."

"With a light step she then left the room. "She is kind," said the young girl, with tears coming in her eyes, "and I'm ungrateful, to think of her, as I have done, only for a few passionate words. How do I know, but she was very much provoked." Thus she cogitated, for about an hour, when a noise, as if some one falling, came from the basement stairs. A loud scream followed. It was little Henry's voice. Kate spring quickly from the sofa, opened the parlour door, and ran through the hall. She leaned over the balusters, to look down. "Oh! you little pest!" cried the child's mother, who was picking him up, in a loud, angry tone. "Hold your tongue! you are not hurt, and march up stairs again, as fast as you can. This is what you get, for coming down here. I told Ann to take care of you. March back, or I'll box your ears."

"Hurt my head, mother," sobbed the poor little fellow.

"No, you haven't. If a would keep you still, I should be glad of it. Go up stairs."

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