

True, endeavoured to ascertain whether he had an intention of increasing the little fortune of Teresa. But Mr. True told him that he could not make the slightest promise. "I have done enough," he observed, for Mrs. Mayfield's daughter. I have many other faithful servants in my establishment, who have strong claims on my assistance. And to be candid with you—you know how trade goes now. A merchant cannot speak plainly, you know, in money matters. Let us drop the subject quietly."

Mr. True really had of late some very heavy losses in trade. Mr. Reinhold knew that well, and both he and his friend believed that things were much worse than was supposed, so that though they were perfectly satisfied of Mr. True's good will, they resigned all hope of having Teresa's portion increased.

Still Mr. Reinhold did not renounce his suit. He asked the mother's consent to have Teresa, no matter what should be her portion. The mother applied to Mr. True for advice. He gave the young man an excellent character, and with tears in his eyes, heartily wished the mother joy.

At that moment Mr. Reinhold entered the office to regulate some accounts. "You come as if you were called," said Mr. True, "I have just been wishing Mrs. Mayfield joy. Need I tell you for what? With all my heart I congratulate you also. You might find a richer, but not a better, partner." He promised that the wedding should be held in his own country house, but he never said a word of any wedding present, or of the slightest contribution to defray any part of Teresa's expenses. Both the mother and Mr. Reinhold were surprised, and knew not what to think of Mr. True's intentions.

CHAPTER V.

THE WEDDING PRESENT.

The wedding came: a small but select party of friends were assembled in the garden house. All was joy and happiness. Dinner was already over, and the dessert was coming on, when, lo! once more a large, delicious melon was set on the table. Mr. True had it placed before the bride, and requested her to serve it.

The melon was wreathed with garlands of flowers; and, as she uncovered it, Teresa's cheeks knitted, when she discovered on the top, the following words, tastefully formed with white flowers and green myrtle—"Hail to gratitude."

She at once remembered the melon, which she had secretly placed on Mr. True's table four years ago.

"Ah, Mr. True!" said she, "nothing can escape you. Even the pettiest favour done to you, cannot go unrewarded. In this line, no one can compete with you."

Mr. True looked as if he did not understand her. He took the garland and placed it on a large porcelain dish, then set the ornaments with the inscription in the midst of the garland, and placed it near the bride. "Quick, now," said he, "divide the melon. We are all anxious to try its flavour."

But the happy bride could not do her duty. All eyes were fixed on her. She blushed again and again. "No," said she at length, "I cannot do it. I don't know whether it is that the melon is too hard, or that the knife is bad. I never was so unsuccessful." The poor bride was greatly embarrassed.

"Oh!" said the old gentleman, with a waggish smile, "I thought you knew how to divide a melon." He gently raised the upper part of the melon, which came off like a lid. "Now, take out the pulp. That's your portion," said he, laughing; "we must content ourselves with the rind."

The bride took her silver spoon to serve the pulp. But, lo! the interior of the melon gleamed and glistened with brilliant gold coin. It was filled with new gold pieces. The bride was amazed, and, starting up, covered Mr. True's hand with her kisses. The mother wept for joy.

"O good and kind-hearted man," said she, "how ingenious you are in giving pleasure to others? How faithfully have you remembered a trifle, which we ourselves had long since forgotten."

The whole company was as much surprised and affected at this noble wedding present, as the bride and bridegroom themselves.

CHAPTER VI.

GENEROSITY AND GRATITUDE.

A profound silence reigned for a moment in the wedding feast; all eyes were fixed in love and reverence on Mr. True; all praised his liberality, and the good use he made of his riches.

Teresa's god-father, a venerable old man, who, for many years had been privately supported by Mr. True, had been invited and brought to the wedding in Mr. True's own carriage. The old man applied to his noble-hearted benefactor, the words of Scripture, "Gave, and it shall be given unto you;" and the verse, "He hath scattered and given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted in glory." "Indeed," said he, "that store from which Mr. True so bounteously dispenses his favours, has the blessing of heaven, and will never be empty." All agreed with the old man in celebrating the virtue and beneficence of their noble host. But Mr. True observed, "Genuine and heartfelt gratitude, is as noble and amiable a virtue as beneficence."

He then told, with the most evident pleasure, how the grateful Teresa had made him a present of the melon four years ago; carefully observing in