

But the most perfect example of patience under suffering, and forbearance under injury, is that of our blessed Lord and Saviour, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"; and who, although he was persecuted to the death, and expired in the midst of the most cruel insults and mocking, breathed out his last in praying for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

THE BROKEN MERCHANT, OR A FEW HINTS TO THE LADIES.

CHAPTER I.

"Will you take another cup of coffee?" said Mrs. M. to her husband, as he leaned, in an abstracted manner, over the breakfast table.

"No, I thank you," he answered, in a half peevish tone, and rising abruptly, took his hat and left the room.

To the eye of the careless observer that house was the abode of plenty, contentment and happiness. Mr. M. had been married about two years. His wife—one of a thousand—and one little, smiling cherub, who was beginning to exhibit those winning and playing ways, which parents, of all others, find so very attractive. And if their establishment was not splendid, according to the ideas of modern nabobs, there was something throughout that bespoke the refinement and elegance of the owners. They knew how to employ and enjoy rationally the wealth where-with Providence had blessed them. The time they had spent together had rather strengthened than diminished their attachment, formed, as it was, on mutual worth, and highly cultivated endowments.

But to return: Mrs. M. followed the retreating form of her husband with anxious and tearful eye, and then leaning her head upon her hand, gave vent to her agonized feelings in a flood of tears. She did not hope for her husband's return before the hour for dinner, and having for several days marked his altered demeanor, she had in vain striven to fathom the cause, and had hoped ere this to have some explanation; but it was plain that he shunned her society, and for the first time shut her out from his confidence. Yet he was certainly not at ease, and evidently anxious to evade any conversation on the subject. She had preserved her equanimity, may even appeared gay in his presence; but now that she was alone her suppressed anxiety broke forth in agony it took her long to subdue. Yet she had in some measure regained her tranquillity, when Mr. S. suddenly entered. His heart smote him for his conduct to his wife—yet he dreaded to tell her that he was a—bankrupt!

He knew her worth and her confiding tenderness, but he wished her dream of happiness to last as long as possible, and he in vain essayed to tell her unshrinkingly that an unfortunate speculation had reduced them from affluence to poverty. Yet the traces of anxiety and suffering which lingered on the countenance of Mrs. M., determined him, and seating himself beside her he made a candid and full disclosure of his altered fortunes.

"And is that all," said Mrs. M. in a gay tone—"is it the loss of a few thousands—the probable sacrifice of a few superfluities, that you have feared to tell me?"

"But consider, Helen," said Mr. M. "you as yet know nothing of poverty from actual comforts of life we feel that there is more of bitterness than of poverty in his actual presence."

"We shall see," she said gaily, and seating herself by the piano poured forth such a glad strain of harmony that Mr. M. himself yielded to its influence, and confessed that they might even yet be very happy.

"But," said he, "should you be compelled to relinquish even this?"

"Then my voice is left—see how I can sing."—And she did sing so sweetly that she convinced even her skeptic husband that something there was that poverty could not rob them of. He felt relieved already of half his misfortunes, now that his wife knew his circumstances, and bore his altered fortunes so calmly. He ate his supper with composure, and returning to his store set himself to a thorough investigation of his affairs. He found them not so bad as he at first feared; and though his business must be suspended, and his style of living contracted, yet he hoped to pay all his debts, and trusted to the future to retrieve the present.

Such were his communications to Mrs. M. "And yet," he said, "when I think of the advantages that you must relinquish—the privations you may yet have to encounter, I confess my spirit sometimes misgives me at the prospect."

"We will see," said Mrs. M. "First here is a large house for three of us; I have often thought, in passing a neat, snug house, how comfortable it looked."

"Well."

"Then here's a quantity of useless furniture which I can seldom trust a servant to keep in order. Some are careless, and some do not know how. Then, the house and furniture disposed of, we shall not want the servants—another perplexity gone, we shall not be expected to give parties and dinners—another material

item in the vexations of life. Again, in our snug little house, none but our *real* friends will ever take the trouble to find us out—more time saved. So you perceive, on every hand we must be gainers."

But, though Mrs. M.'s affections for her husband and her own excellent understanding, prompted her to treat her present posture of affairs so lightly, and though she held herself ready to make any sacrifice with cheerfulness which circumstances might require, yet she knew and felt keenly that the draught which adversity compels us to swallow is indeed bitter. She knew enough of society to be well aware that in the circle which prosperity draws around us there are always some who look with envious eyes upon our condition, and would exult at our fallen fortunes; but, whatever she felt, she saw that her husband felt more, and resolved that no repinings on her part should add one atom to his perplexities.

CHAPTER II.

Ring, ding! went the bell, at an early hour, at the house of Miss Deborah Greenwood; and the servants ushered in Mrs. Marshall.

"Have you heard the news?" said she after a few preliminaries.

"What news?"

"Oh, only that Mr. M. has failed—positively lost every thing!—a great speculator, they say. But, do you know that it is hinted that his habits, in secret, are quite dissipated, and that he has lost heavy sums at the gaming table?"

"But," chimed in Miss Greenwood, "what will become of poor Mrs. M.? she will have to lower her pretensions, I'm thinking."

"After all, it is no such great pity," observed Mrs. Marshall; "I never could see what there was in her, more than in any other folks, that every one should go mad about Mrs. M.'s good taste, and Mrs. M.'s good temper, and Mrs. M.'s surpassing abilities. Trust me, that when it is known that Mrs. M. is poor, she will be no more courted than any of us."

This very charitable tete-a-tete was interrupted by the arrival of another visitor;—Mrs. Bell. She had more genuine kindness in her nature, and heard of Mr. M.'s misfortunes with unfeigned regret, not excepting his habits of dissipation and the suggestions of wanton extravagance on the part of Mrs. M. "I have been a frequent visitor at their house," said Mrs. Bell, "at all hours, and have thought their domestic arrangements among the best I have ever seen; and I have looked upon them as a pattern of conjugal happiness."

After a few minutes spent in miscellaneous conversation, Mrs. Bell apologized for her short stay, saying that "as she had but just heard of Mrs. M.'s misfortunes, she felt inexcusable in appearing to neglect her—at a time, too, when her mind must be exceedingly sensitive on the subject."

"Just like yourself," said Mrs. Marshall, "and by your leave I will bear you company—for really I am quite curious to see how she carries herself at present."

"And I too," said Miss Greenwood, "as the morning is fine, will be of your party."

We will not scan more minutely the motives which severally prompted the trio as they started together for a call on Mrs. M. They found her at home, dressed neatly but plainly, and were received with so much politeness and cheerfulness, and she conversed with so much affability and even vivacity, that Mrs. Marshall and Miss Greenwood often exchanged glances, as much as to say, Poor thing! she either does not know her husband's condition, or hopes to conceal it. Not so Mrs. Bell: as the others rose to depart, she excused herself for remaining, by the remark, that as Mrs. M. was fortunately alone, and not having any particular engagement she would spend the day with her.

This was a most welcome communication to Helen; for she felt that the judgment and experience of Mrs. Bell would materially aid her in maturing her private plans for the future.—To her, therefore, she made a plain and candid statement of their circumstances; adding that though Mr. M. hoped, by giving up all his effects, to satisfy all just demands, yet there would be but a slender pittance left and that considerable time must elapse before he could be again engaged in any profitable business.

"And now my dear friend," continued Mrs. M., "I am going to communicate a little plan of my own, which, in Mr. M.'s present goaded state of feeling, I have deemed best not to communicate to him; for he is not yet sufficiently reconciled to his condition to think calmly of my submitting to any exertion for a livelihood. But, why not? I know of no laws of equity which fixes a stigma on any effort a wife can make, however severely the husband's ingenuity may be taxed. Briefly, then, I have thought of turning to some account those accomplishments which some have thought proper to compliment me on possessing. I think I could be content in a small house, in a less expensive part of the town, and that besides attending to our little domestic duties, I could find leisure to instruct a few young ladies in music and drawing. And I must throw myself upon the generosity of my friends for patronage."

Mrs. Bell warmly seconded the views of her friend, and promised to use the utmost of her influence in her behalf.

CHAPTER III.

It was a pleasant morning in the month of June when Mrs. Bell's carriage drove up to a small but genteel looking house in the upper part of the city, and having alighted, gave orders to the coachman not to call for her until evening.

She was shown into a neat parlor, where a genteel and happy-looking woman was engaged with a group of young ladies, whom she was instructing in some elegant fancy work; but as the lesson seemed nearly concluding, she begged she might not be any interruption; and gently seating herself on the sofa, took a leisurely survey of the scene around her. The apartment to some would have seemed plainly furnished, but yet there was such an air of elegance and refinement throughout, that it puzzled her to think of any thing lacking. Then there was such a display of neatness and order in the arrangement, that at once suggested to the mind the idea of comfort and contentment.

Mrs. M.—for she was the lady of the mansion—soon dismissed her little company, and prepared to entertain her guest with the same cheerfulness and urbanity which had distinguished her most prosperous days. I will not say she felt more happy, but it was evident the pleasing consciousness of performing her duty and lessening the cares of a husband deservedly dear to her, more than counterbalanced the trouble of performing it. She was one who did not place her dignity in the mere equipage of wealth; and it would not have been less conspicuous even in the most abject poverty.

As the dinner hour approached, Mrs. M. apologized for a short absence, merely observing in a playful manner that her domestic establishment was not extensive. But little did her friend imagine, when the well ordered and well dressed dinner appeared, together with the neatly attired and elegant hostess, that a single servant constituted her whole establishment. At dinner Mr. M. appeared—not the dejected, broken spirited man, but the happy husband and father, whose home was of all places on earth the one happy place for him. It was true their house was no longer the resort of promiscuous visitors; for they lived so far, so very far up town, that it was not possible for their fashionable friends to visit them very often; but then the little circle who knew and appreciated that worth which could survive the decay of fortune, made up enough of society to a couple mutually happy in each other and contented with their lot.

Months and even years passed away; children grew up around; friends were multiplied, and wealth increased; and Mr. M. is now one of the wealthiest of our citizens; but he has often declared that but for the praiseworthy magnanimity of his wife, he should never probably have risen; that had he been met with impatience or repining when his spirit was already goaded to madness, it had probably destroyed its elasticity for ever; or if, in the commencement of his second career, he had been subjected to what might have been deemed the justifiable demands of his wife, instead of the careful husbanding of their slender resources, the road to his ascent had been rendered difficult—perhaps for ever inaccessible.

THE STARS.

"The stars that in their courses roll,
Have much instruction given."

Look at the distant star that twinkles in the firmament. There it has shone with undiminished lustre for centuries.—The eyes that gazed upon it thousands of years ago, saw it the same as we behold it now. It has held its place through successive empires. If we look back through the vista of distant ages, we find it there. It beheld Rome in her might and majesty. It looked upon Babylon in the days of her glory. It saw Egypt in her rising greatness.—Yet it still shines on without change or diminution. Perpetuity, constancy is stamped upon it. Yet this is but a feeble type of the constancy and endurance of heavenly friendship.—Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name; if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease to be a nation before me forever. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, that hath mercy on thee." If we attach so much value to the constancy that can abide but for a few years at most, how can we estimate aright that which endureth forever! Think of a friendship, the measure of whose duration is eternity itself—the tenure of it without limit or end. O, what a basis for everlasting confidence is this!

The following passage is from a new novel by Sarah Stickney, author of the "Poetry of Life."

FALSEHOOD.—There are many sins, even of commission, which elude our own detection from the indefinite or plausible aspect they assume. But a direct falsehood admits of no palliation. It stamps the page of conscience with a stain no human hand can wipe away; it stands in daring opposition to the nature and will of God; and as it rises to the vault of heaven seems to echo back the thunders of the rebel army, who even there defied the majesty of eternal truth.