

HASZARD'S GAZETTE

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THE STILL SMALL VOICE.

Poor, tired little Frank! He had gazed at that stereotyped street panorama till his eyelids were drooping with weariness—omnibus, carts, wheelbarrows, men, women, horses, and children; the same old story. There is a little beggar-boy driving hoop. Frank never drives hoop—no, he is dressed too nicely for that. Once a while he takes the air; but the serving-man, or Mary the nurse, holds his hand very tightly, lest he should soil his embroidered frock. Now little Frank changes from one foot to the other, and then he creeps up to his young mamma, who lies half buried in those satin cushions, reading the last new novel, and lays his hand on her soft curls; but she shakes him off with an impatient "Don't be frisky!" and he creeps back again to his window.

There winds a funeral slowly past. How and the mourners look clad in sable, with their handkerchiefs to their eyes! It is a child's funeral, too; for there is no hearse, and the black pall floats from the first carriage-window like a signal of distress. A sudden thought strikes Frank; the tears spring to his eyes, and, creeping again to his mother's side, he says, "Mamma, must I die, too?"

"Yes—no! What an odd question! Pull the bell, Charley. Here, John, take Frank up stairs to the nursery, and coax him to sleep; put tricks for him." And Frank's mamma settles herself down again upon her luxurious cushions.

The room is very quiet now that Frank is banished; nobody is in it but herself and the canary. Her position is quite easy; her favorite book between her fingers; why not yield herself again to the author's witching spell? Why do the words, "Must I die, too?" stare at her from every page? She turns the page, and she is childish to heed them; and she rises, lays aside the book, and sweeps her white hand across her harp-strings, while her rich voice floats musically upon the air. One stanza only she sings, then her hands fall by her side; for still that little, plaintive voice keeps ringing in her ear. "Must I die, too, mamma?"

Death—why, it is a thing she has never thought of; and she walks up to the long mirror. Death for her, with that beaming eye and scarlet lip, and rosy cheeks and sunny tress, and rounded limbs, and springing step! Death for her, with broad lands, and full coffers, and the world of fashion at her feet!—Death for her, with the love of that princely husband, who covets even the kiss of the breeze as it fans her white brow! Darkness, decay—oblivion! (No, not oblivion! There is a future, but she has never looked into it.)

"Well, which is it, my pet, the opera, the concert, or Madame B's soiree? I am yours to command."

"Neither, I believe, Walter. I am out of tune to-night; or, as Madame B. would say, 'Vapourish'; so I shall inflict myself on nobody;—but—"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Rose; I am fond of a merry frolic, too. Shall I, now, or I'm off to the club, or the billiard-room; or, as husbands say when they are 'hard up' for an excuse, I have 'a business engagement.' What! a tear? What grief can you have, little Rose?"

"You know, Walter, what a strange child our Frank is. Well, he asked me such an odd, old-fashioned question to-day. 'Must I die, too, mamma?' in that little fluttering voice of his, and it is so touching, that I can't rid myself of it; and, dear Walter," she said, laying her tearful cheek upon his shoulder, "I don't know that I ought to try."

"Oh, nonsense, Rose!" said the gay husband, "don't turn Methodist; if you love me. Aunt Charity has religion enough for the whole nation. You can't ask her why she will the wind in it, but you have a description of a man. Religion is well enough for priests—it is their stock in trade; well enough for children and old people; well enough for ancient virgins, who like vestry meetings to pass away a long evening; but for you, Rose, the very queen of love and beauty, in the first flush of youth and health—pshaw! Call Camille to arrange your hair, and let's to the opera. Time enough for you to think of religion, when you see your first grey hair."

Whenever her eye fell, there was some sad reminiscence to torture her. They whose life had been all sunshine came in from cheerful hours, whose threshold death's shadow had never darkened, to offer consolation. All the usual phrases of stereotyped condolence had fallen upon her ear; and now they had all gone, and the world would move on just the same that there was one more broken heart in it. She must bear her weary weight as alone. She knew that her star had set. Earth, sea, and sky had no beauty now, since this eye that worshipped them with her was closed and rayless.

"Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth," said Uncle John, joining the tips of the fingers of either hand, and setting himself in a vestry attitude, to say his lesson. "Afflictions come not out of heaven, as some people think, like a shower from the God of the widow and the fatherless. I suppose you find it so?" said he, looking into the widow's face.

"I can scarcely tell," said Janie. "This was a lightning-flash from a summer-cloud. My eyes are blinded; I cannot see the bow of promise."

"Wrong—all wrong," said Uncle John. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. You ought to be religious. I'm afraid you don't enjoy religion. Afflictions are mercies in disguise. I'll lend you this volume of 'Dewdrops' to read. You must get submissive, somehow, or you will have some other trouble sent upon you. Good morning."

Uncle John was a rigid sectarian, of the blindest school of divinity; enjoyed an immense reputation for sanctity, than which nothing was dearer to him save the contents of his pocket-books. It was his glory to be the Alpha and Omega of parish gatherings and committees; to be consulted on the expediency of sending tracts to Kangaroo Islands; to be present at the laying of cornerstones for embryo churches; to stime conspicuously at ordinations, donation visits, Sabbath-school celebrations, colporteur meetings—in short, anything that smacked of a church-steeple, or added one inch to the light and grandeur of his parsonial skirt. He pitied the poor, as every good Christian should; but he never allowed them to put their hand in his pocket; that was a territory over which the church had no control—it belonged entirely to the other side of the fence.

Uncle John sat in his counting-room, looking very satisfactorily at the proof-sheets of the *Morning Star*, of which he was editor. He had just glanced over his long list of subscribers, and congratulated himself that matters were in such a prosperous condition. Then he took out a large roll of bank-bills, and fingered them most affectionately; then he frowned ominously at a poor beggar-child, who peeped in at the door; smoothed his chin, and settled himself comfortably in his rocking-chair.

A rap at the door of the counting-room. "May I come in, uncle?" said Janie's long black veil was thrown back by her hand and face.

"Y-e-s," said Uncle John rather frigidly. "Pretty busy; 's'pose you won't stay long?" and he pushed his portmanteau further down in his pocket.

"I came to ask," said Janie timidly, "if you would employ me to write for your paper. Matters are moving here with me, and I had just glanced over my long list of subscribers, and congratulated myself that matters were in such a prosperous condition. I believe I have talents that I might turn to account as a writer. I have literally nothing, Uncle John, to depend upon."

"Your husband was an extravagant man; lived too fast—that's the trouble—lived too fast. Ought to have been economical as I was, when I was a young man. Can't have your cake and eat it; you must choose between the two. For other people's deficiencies. You must take care of yourself."

"Certainly; that's just what I wish to do," said Janie, struggling to restrain her tears. "I—I—," but she only finished the sentence with sobs: the contrast between the sunny past and the gloomy present was too strong for her troubled heart.

Now, if there was anything Uncle John mortally hated, it was to see a woman cry. In all such cases he irritated the victim till she took a speedy and frenzied leave. So he remarked again that "Mr. May was extravagant, else there would have been something left. He was sorry he was dead; but that was a thing he wasn't to blame for, and he didn't know any reason why he should be bothered about it. The world was full of widows; they all went to work, he supposed, and took care of themselves."

"If you will tell me whether you can employ me to write for you," said the widow, "I will not trouble you longer."

"I have plenty who will write for nothing," said the old man. "Market is overstocked with that sort of thing. Can't afford to pay contributors, especially new beginners. Don't think you have any talent that way, either. Better take in sewing, or something," said he, taking notice of her hat, by way of a reminder that she had better be going.

And what made foot-prints, but where the well-warmed, well-dad, and well-bright at Diver's table.

Time flew on. A brighter day dawned for Janie. She had triumphed over disappointments and discouragements before which stouter hearts than hers had quailed. Comfort and independence were again hers, earned by her own untiring hand. Uncle John was not afraid of her now. He turned no more short corners to avoid her. She needed no assistance. Uncle John liked to notice that sort of people. He grew amiable, even flattered; and one day, in his superabundance, actually sent a three-cent piece to his nephew, whom he had not inquired for, for three long years. Janie's smiles reached him from every quarter, and he took a great deal of pains to let people know that this new literary light was his niece. Had he known she would have turned out such a star, he would have employed her. Now she was swelling other editors' subscription-lists instead of his. That was a feature of the case he was fully prepared to understand.

"No, I don't think that way!" said Janie to herself, as she saw him, at last very coolly transferred, with his editorial hand, her articles to *The Morning Star*, without credit, without remuneration to herself. Sanctimonious, avaricious Uncle John! did you count the tears which blistered their pages? Did you dream of the torturing process by which the bird was blinded, ere it could be learned to sing so sweetly? Knew you that those winking notes round your neck, through your hair, from a young captive's throat? No, no, Uncle John! how should you? For where your heart should have been, there was a decided vacuum.

MY LITTLE SUNBEAM.

Never saw my little sunbeam! Well, she was a little creature who passed my window each day, on her way to school, and who made my acquaintance, child fashion, with a smile. Perhaps none but myself would have called her pretty; but her eyes were full of love, and her voice of music. Every day she laid a little bunch of violets on my window. You might have thought it a trifling gift, but it was much to me; for, after my little sunbeam had vanished, I closed my eyes, and the fragrance of those tiny flowers carried me back, oh, whither?

They told of a fragrant, shadowy wood; of a rippling brook; of a bird's song; of whirring leaf-music; of a mossy seat; of dark, soul-till eyes; of a voice sweet, and thrilling; of a vow that was never broken till death chilled the lips that made it. God shield my little Sunbeam! May she find more roses than thorns in her earthly pathway!

SELF-CONQUEST.

"Well, Bridget, what do you think of the bride?"

"Oh, she's a pretty young thing; but if she had known as much as you and I do of her husband's mother, she never would have come to live with her. She's a regular old hussy; and if she don't bring the tears into those blue eyes before the honeymoon is over, my name isn't Bridget. Why she's the most audacious old thing I ever saw! She overruled my wedding registry, before she could get here; and, as I passed through the entry, I heard her muttering to herself, 'Silk stockings, lumps! ruffled under-clothes! Wonder if she thinks I'll have them ironed here! Embroidered night-caps, silk dresses! Destruction and ruin!'"

"I'll tell you what, Bridget, there never was a house built yet, that was big enough for two families to live in; and you'll find out that that won't be, I reckon."

"What! tears, Emma! tears!" said the young husband, as he returned from his counting-room one day, and, a month after their marriage; and, with a look of anxiety, he drew her closer to his breast. "Tell me, you do not so soon repent your choice? The little rosy mouth was held open temptingly for a kiss; and in those blue eyes he read the conqueror's heart was seeking."

"What, then, is your pet canary sick? Can't you dress your hair to suit you? Or are you in despair because you can't decide in which of all your dresses you look prettiest?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Harry!" said Emma, laughing and crying together. "I feel nervous, that's all. I'm so glad you've come home, that I can't be at all; but he forbore to question her, for he felt very sure she would tell him all in good time."

The truth was, Harry's mother had been lecturing her daughter-in-law all the morning upon the degeneracy of the times—hoped she would not think of putting on all the latest fashions her friends had been so foolish to rig her out in; that she was not as they used to be; that if Harry gave her pocket-money, she had better give it to her to keep, and not to spend it for nonsense; that a young wife who lived in her husband's house—and she hoped she would leave off that babyish trick of running home every day to see her mother and sisters.

It required all Emma's love for Harry to carry her through.

She still adhered to her determination, however, to conceal her trouble from her husband; and though he noticed she was less vivacious, perhaps he thought the mantle of maternity fell upon his young wife, that he felt no disposition to find fault with it. In the meantime, old Mrs. Hall being confined to her room with a violent influenza, the reins of government were very unwillingly resigned into Emma's hands. What endless charges she received about the dining, and sweeping, and cooking, ending always with this salutation, as she stood upon Emma's retreating form: "I am a goose to tell her anything about it. She's as ignorant as a Hottentot—it will all go in one ear and out the other." And the old lady groined in spirit as the vision of the nose of the tea-kettle pointing the wrong way for the success hung on the wrong wall, fitted through her mind. Emma exerted herself to the utmost to please her; but the great was always "not quite right," the pillows and cushions easily behind her back, as she expected to find "Bellias let loose" when she got down stairs, and various other encouraging prognostications of the same character.

"Emma," said Harry, "how should you like living five miles out of the city? I have seen a place that just suits my fancy, and I think of hiring it on trial."

"Emma," said Harry, "how should you like living five miles out of the city? I have seen a place that just suits my fancy, and I think of hiring it on trial."

"Well, dear Emma, now I'm very sure you will like it!—and my large dark eyes had a look she did not quite understand, even with all her skill and practice in reading them. "—and as I'm going to drive you out there this afternoon, and we'll see," said he gaily kissing her forehead.

"Oh, what a little Paradise, Harry! Look at that cluster of grape-roses! What splendid old trees! See how the wind sweeps the drooping branches across the tall grass! And that little, low window, latticed over with sweet-brier; and that pretty terraced flower-garden—O Harry!"

"Well, let us go inside, Emma," and, applying a key he held in his hand, the door yielded to his touch, and they stood side by side in a little rustic parlour, furnished simply, but tastefully; tables, stands, and mantel, covered with roses, sending forth fragrance from the sweetest of wild-wood flowers; the long white muslin curtains looped away from a window, whence could be seen wooded hill, and fertile valley, and silvery stream. Then they accended into the old chamber, which was quite as unexceptionable in its appointments. Emma looked about in bewildered wonder.

"But she lives here now, Harry!"

"Nobody! What a tease you are! To whom does all this furniture belong? and who arranged everything with such exquisite taste? I have been expecting every minute to see the mistress of the mansion step out."

"Well, there she is," said Harry, leading her gaily up to the looking-glass. "I only hope you admire her half as much as I do. You think I've been blind and deaf, because I've been dumb! Do you think I've not seen my high-spirited little wife struggling with trial day by day, suffering, enduring, gaining the victory over her own spirit, silently and uncomplainingly! Do you think I could see all this, and not think she was the dearest little wife in the world? And tears and smiles struggled for mastery as he pressed his lips to her forehead. "And now you will have nobody to please here but me, Emma. Do you think the task will be difficult?"

The answer, though highly satisfactory to the husband, was not intended for you, dear reader; so please excuse Fanny Fern.

OUR HATTY.

She might have had twenty other names, but that was the only appellation I ever heard. It was, "Get out of the way, Hatty!" "I dare say Hatty broke that vase, or lost that book!" "Don't come here, what a fright you are, Hatty! till the poor sensitive child almost felt as if she had the mark of Cain upon her forehead. She had brothers and sisters, but they were bright, and saucy, and bold; and cunning; and, when they wished to carry out a favourite scheme, could throw their arms about the parental neck, faster some weak side, carry the day, and laugh at their juvenile foresight; so their coffers were always filled, while poor Hatty's was empty; and she laid all these things up in her little grieved heart, and, as she saw duplicity better rewarded than sincerity, began to have little infidel doubts whether the Bible, that her father read so much out of, was really true; while Joseph's "coat of many colours" flattered over before her fearful eyes! All her sweet, childish impulses were checked and crushed; and where the sweet flowers of love and confidence should have sprung up, the weeds of distrust and suspicion took bitter root!

She took no part in the conversation of the domestic circle, "She was stupid," so they told her; and she had heard it till she believed it true. Sometimes, as was often the case, some talented person made part of the family circle; on such occasions, Hatty would listen in her corner till her great, wild eyes glistened and burned like living coals of fire. But there was one spot where more despatched Hatty's right to reign—a little lonely room at the top of the house, which she had studded up in her own wild way, and where she was free from reproach or intrusion.

You should have seen her there, with her little yearning heart half broken by neglect, doubtful of her own powers, and weeping each passionate hour that she was "so stupid, and ugly, and disagreeable," that nobody could ever love her! And so she made friends with the holy stars, the dewy clouds, and the brilliant rainbow, the silver moon-beam, and the swift lightning; and an artistic eye, seeing her soul-lit face at that small window, might have fancied her some Italian improvisatrice! There the fetters fell off, the soul was free, and the countenance mirrored its truth. Back in the family circle, she was again "Our Hatty!"

"That young daughter of yours differs very much from the rest of the family, Mr. Lee," said a maiden lady, who was visiting there.

"Yes, yes!" said the old man, with a shrug. "She don't look much like a Lee; in fact, she's very plain. She's a stranger, unaccountable child, likes her own company better than anybody else's, and don't care a rush for all the nick-nacks other girls are tossing for. Sometimes I think she belongs to another brood—got changed in the cradle, or something."

"How does she spend her time?" said Miss Tabatha.

"I'm sure I don't know. Wife says she has a little den at the top of the house, where she sits star-gazing. Queer child, that Hatty! plain as a pike-staff!" and Mr. Lee took up his newspaper, and put his feet on the mantel.

Miss Tabatha was confounded. She had an unaccountably strange secret for an old maid. She had never been a parent; she wished she had, just to show some people what a nice one she'd have made! She inwardly resolved to know more of "Our Hatty!"

(To be Continued.)