

a useless fork with a good handle, lying in a rubbish heap; which would mend his recently broken one, and save expense. He hastened to get it when his wife took the team.

As the family were gathered around the kitchen stove that evening, Mrs. Miles busily sewing, her husband reading the paper and the children variously busy, she thought of a dress-pattern she had been unable to buy for lack of funds.

'I saw a great bargain at Brow's, to-day, Gracie, a beautiful piece of dress goods, all wool with linings and trimmings all complete. The pattern may have been a trifle scant but I think we could have made it answer. I wanted very much to get it for you,' and a faint sigh escaped her.

Solon Miles, figuratively speaking, pricked up his ears. He delighted in bargains and 'sposed women folks must have some clothes.'

'How much was the cloth?' he asked from behind his paper.

'The price was five dollars,' she replied, 'but it has been marked down to three-fifty. It is well worth five dollars for it is a beautiful piece of goods.'

'Three-fifty,' he thought; 'that is an awful price to pay for one dress; but if it is a bargain we had better secure it, as Grace will need to have a dress some time most likely. Besides, she was so disappointed about the music lessons, and this is cheaper, and will probably answer just as well.'

Aloud he said, 'Well, why don't you get it? You can send for it in the morning by Taylor. I'll give you the money.' He took his purse from his pocket, and very carefully counted out the exact change.

It was so unusual, the whole family gazed at him for a moment in astonishment. A glad, happy light came into Mrs. Miles's eyes, and a rosy color to her cheeks. Grace went flitting over to her side, like a bird that flies for joy.

'Tell me more about it, mamma. What is the color? And how shall we make it?'

She ran for the fashion papers, and they talked together like two happy children. The boys ventured to make rather more noise than usual, and secretly wondered, 'what ailed father.'

Even Mr. Miles dropped his paper to enjoy the atmosphere of cheerfulness that pervaded the room. His generosity gave him a very self-satisfied mind, and he even began to suggest plans for remodelling the house, 'when the other farm is paid for.'

Such a pleasant evening, just among themselves, was an event long remembered. The sight of the dress, too, always brought pleasant recollections. Though it certainly did not offset the benefit of a musical education to Grace, it did soften her heart towards her father.

'I suppose he is saving to help me, also,' she reasoned, 'but I wish I could have a little of his savings now while I could use it to the best advantage.'

They learned, alas, no lesson of value from this life of rigid denial. No wise counsellor foretold, that as they narrowed their existence by constant saving, the poor inner man would be crippled and confined, until he would almost cease to influence the material one in which he was embodied. A grasping desire to accumulate, is a very different thing from true economy.

As the years passed by Mrs. Miles grew weaker, both in physical strength and will. One day she became unusually disheartened. Going to her little room, which was nearly destitute of all but the mere necessities she dropped wearily into a little low chair by the only window.

'Why am I situated thus?' she wondered.

'When I have tried so hard, and have myself done so much to help pay for our home and more land, too, than we needed. Yet, now, I can have none of the benefits of the wealth we have accumulated nor the comforts which my whole nature craves. We are surrounded by much less wealthy people yet deny ourselves, as luxuries, everything elevating or refining; which to them are common necessities.'

Then she tried to shake off her melancholy thoughts by prayer. 'Oh, God, teach me to overcome the desire to enjoy the privileges, which are bestowed upon thy other children. Teach me rather to live in thee, that in things spiritual I may find the joy denied in material. I am but a broken reed, crushed by environment instead of its conqueror. Teach me to relinquish ungrudgingly the things I long for most. Teach me to bear my daily lot and to look forward to the life hereafter for thy blessings.'

Pitiful was the weakness into which she had fallen. Pitiful also, the result, that must follow from her lack of strength. But as the prayer of faith will ever find answer, she was helped to live her present bare existence. But, not only was her life affected, but those to whom she was supposed to administer, according to her best judgment. And the lives of her children were well worth a struggle for a right and generous living.

A few years passed, and Grace wedded a man highly approved by her parents, not only for his economical habits but for the small farm he already owned. He would surely be amply competent to manage the property his wife would receive at the death of her father, to which he was now looking forward.

A life of deprivation caused the lines that were soon discernible on her once pretty face, and her will fast grew to resemble her mother's. The boys had married. They were known in their locality chiefly for their tendency to drive sharp bargains, sometimes even verging upon dishonesty. Their meagre education had been acquired at the school in their district, for their father had never seen the time when he wished to spare money that would not bring returns in the same kind. Their dress was not calculated to give them self-respect in society, so they avoided the companionship of others who might have aroused them to desire a better and fuller life. Sometimes family dissensions were brought about, when one brother allowed his acquisitiveness to overrule brotherly regard, for the gain of a few more of the much-prized dollars.

And so the work of narrowing their earthly existence continued. The lives which might have been filled with innocent pleasures and devoted to the elevation of their fellowmen, were moving in opposition to the law of both natural and spiritual progress, and doing their part in delaying the time when the heavenly kingdom shall be also the earthly.

One Paper of Pins.

(By Martha Clark Rankin, in 'Wellspring'.)

'There goes Mis' Reed's funeral procession,' said my dressmaker, as she deftly hooked my waist, at the same time watching the line of passing carriages. 'Dretful queer woman, wa'n't she?'

'I didn't know her at all,' was my response.

'You didn't? And didn't you ever hear about her getting along on one paper of pins?'

'One paper of pins! What do you mean?' was my puzzled inquiry.

'Why, I mean that Mis' Reed was fifty

years old, and she'd never had but one paper of pins in her life! She said 'twould be extravagance to buy another, and she was worth more'n twenty thousand dollars, too! Her only ambition seemed to be to get along without ever buying any more pins, and she'd pick one up wherever she could find it. Folks say there's whole rows on that old paper that's never been touched! She was just about as 'fraid to use a pin as she was a cent. Well, it does beat all how queer folks get sometimes!'

As I put on my coat and left the house, just in time to see the last of the carriages disappear round the corner, there arose in my mind an involuntary image of Mrs. Reed, niggardly, small-minded, selfish, looking down instead of up, with no broad views of life, without sympathy for her fellow-mortals.

Afterwards, I found that the real 'Mis' Reed' was very much such a person as the one of my mental vision, and I felt that here was a warning for young people to beware of small ambitions. Economy is a good thing, a virtue that ought to be practiced to a certain extent, but to make it an ambition, the ruling purpose of one's life, especially when its practice is unnecessary, is to dwarf and degrade one's character.

Every life should have a ruling purpose, an ideal which is always spurring one on to greater attainment, but it is of the utmost importance that this purpose, this ideal, be uplifting and ennobling. Let us beware of anything so small as the ambition to get through life on one paper of pins.

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