

Choice Literature.

WHEN MR. SMITH MISSED THE TRAIN.

BY HELEN E. STARRETT.

Mr. Smith missed the train by just one half minute, and he was in a furious temper over the matter. He lived in a pretty, country-like suburban village, about forty-five minutes' ride from the large city in which he had his place of business, and he was accustomed to take this particular train every morning. Not once in three months did such a thing happen as his being late for the train; but on this occasion he felt like declaring that half the time he had to rush himself clear out of breath to reach it, or else miss it.

He was in that exasperated state of mind where he wanted to blame somebody, abuse somebody; a state of mind which, in a condition of development a little nearer the savage, would impel to acts of cruelty toward anything or any person on whom anger could be wreaked. The person on whom, in this instance, he could most quickly and with the least impunity cast blame was his wife. It was all her fault. Why could not she manage household affairs so that he could get his breakfast earlier? He worked like a slave at his business ten hours a day; he gave her full control of the house and furnished money to run it; she had a servant, and it was pure and utter shiftlessness in her that breakfast could not be ready in proper time. Thus, with flashing eyes, soliloquized Mr. Smith as, with anger-flushed face, he watched the train disappearing in the distance.

It was a full hour and a half till the next train; it was half a mile back to Mr. Smith's house. He paced back and forth nervously for a few minutes on the station platform, debating in his mind whether he should wait there for the next train or go back home. As he mused, his anger grew. He would go back home and give his wife such a piece of his mind as she would remember for months. She should be made to feel that it was no light matter to have breakfast five minutes late. He turned his face homeward and stamped heavily along, with the air of a man determined to do a desperate deed. His face was flushed with anger and his eye gleamed fiercely.

But, as he hastened along, somehow or other his attention was diverted by the song of a bird among the trees that lined his path. He looked up involuntarily. How brightly the sun was shining; how blue the sky was; how balmy and fragrant the air; how peaceful everything appeared as he looked off through the green spaces on either side of the village street. The trees were putting forth their tenderest green; so was the grass. He noticed the fragrance of the crab-apple and wild plum blossoms; he distinguished the peculiar strain of a bird he used to hear in boyhood. It was the wood-thrush. He had listened to that bird when, years ago, he had walked in the meadows and lanes with the pretty, shy young girl whom his heart was then bent on winning for his wife. She was his wife now. She was the mother of three rosy, active children; they were his and hers. She was not as pretty now as she was then; she was thin and careworn. The plump rosiness and merry smile were, for the most part, gone.

But what a good, true wife she had been to him. How had her economy and faithfulness helped him in getting the start he now had in the world. How little she saw of the outside world, or of diverting pleasures. How self-denying and uncomplaining she had been, and what a devoted mother to their children! And on that bright, sunshiny morning he had been thinking hard thoughts of her, and meditating what sharp, cutting words he could say to her—and all for a trivial little loss of an hour from business. Mr. Smith's pace slackened; his countenance relaxed; his heart melted. On such a morning he could not, would not, by harsh words mar the harmony and beauty of the sunshine and birds and the green things growing. No; if he could not speak kindly he would hold his peace.

As Mr. Smith neared his home he felt a certain shrinking from meeting his wife directly. He almost feared he might betray on his countenance some of the harsh thoughts he had been thinking. So he went around the side of the house and entered the kitchen door. Bridget was standing with a perplexed and exasperated expression on her face, looking into the kitchen stove, in which smouldered a dark, dying fire.

"What is the matter, Bridget?"

"Faith, sur, it's the stove that breaks me heart entirely. The grate is broken and the stove-pipes smokes, and whin I thrive to make a quick fire, here's the way it serves me."

"Well, Bridget, I believe it is all my fault. Your mistress has asked me many times to bring a new grate from the city, and also to send a man to clean out the stove-pipe and chimney. I will put this down in my note-book, and bring the new grate this evening, and Pat McFlynn, the tinner, shall be sent right up this morning to clean and fix the stove-pipe."

"Oh, thank ye sur," said Bridget, with a brightening countenance, "And could Pat fix the cistern, too? The pump has been broken a long toime and keeps me back in me work and breaks me back drawing water with a rope."

Again Mr. Smith's conscience smote him. How often had his wife asked him to send a man to fix the cistern?

"Yes, Bridget, the cistern shall be fixed this very day."

"Well, sur, thin I think I'll stay. I was just tellin' the mistress that I wouldn't work any longer with such inconveniences, but if the stove and cistern are fixed a poor girl can get along."

Mr. Smith made another memorandum in his book and passed on through the dining-room toward his wife's room. He noticed that her plate indicated an untasted breakfast. Softly he opened the door of their room. His wife started up hastily with an expression of alarmed inquiry on her face. Her eyes were wet with tears. The baby, still in its night-clothes, was fretting in the cradle, while a little two-year-old, partly dressed, tugged at her skirts.

"And so you missed the train—breakfast was late—well, I can't help it—Bridget is going to leave, too," and the poor little woman covered her face with her hands and burst into sobs and tears. She fully expected angry complaints from her husband, and in some vague way she felt she was to blame. She could not compass everything, and the babies were so troublesome. Oh, did every young mother have such a hard time as she did?

"Why, darling, what is the matter?" said Mr. Smith, putting his arms around his wife, and drawing her to him. "Come, don't mind. I think it is really mostly my own fault. I have come through the kitchen, and I find Bridget has so much trouble with the stove being broken and the chimney smoking that I wonder she can get breakfast at all."

"I ought to get up in time to see that you have breakfast early," sobbed the poor little woman; "but Bridget is so cross this morning and I—I am so tired."

"No wonder, darling, that you are tired, with the care of these big babies wearing on you all the time. You have no business to have any care of breakfast at all, and you shall not after this. You need your good morning nap and you shall have it. Bridget is all right. I'm going to get that broken stove and cistern fixed to-day, and then if Bridget can't get breakfast in time we'll find some other way to do. Come, now, cheer up, and I'll help you to dress these rogues; I have plenty of time before the next train."

How wonderful is the effect upon the physical nature of a spiritual impulse! How quickly can an uplifted and strengthened spirit energize and strengthen the body! Everything seemed instantly changed for poor, dejected little Mrs. Smith. She laid her cheek on her husband's breast, feeling what a haven of strength and peace it was. How dear and precious was his love and protection. Her eyes brightened and her cheeks glowed. Her weariness and depression, which had been utter misery, gave way to a delightful feeling of repose and loving happiness. In the midst of the most prosaic surroundings, her heart was full of the finest and most inspiring emotion.

"Dear, dear love, how good you are," she said. "How you have changed the aspect of everything for me this morning. Had you reproached me, as many husbands would have done, I would have sunk in the deepest anguish. Now I feel strong—strong and happy."

Releasing his wife with a tender kiss, Mr. Smith took the baby from the cradle and merrily drew its stockings and shoes on its little, plump, kicking, rosy feet. Then he brushed out the other little fellow's curls and buttoned his shoes. Willie, the oldest, had slipped out of the house, and Mr. Smith went to look for him, and found that he had taken advantage of an insecure lock on the gate to run off up street. Bringing him back, Mr. Smith got the hatchet, and in a few minutes had the gate fixed so that Master Willie could not open it. His wife smilingly opened the front door, and, seeing what had been done, exclaimed: "Oh, I am so relieved to find that Willie cannot get out of the yard. It has been such a trouble that he could open the gate."

Now it was time to start for the next train, if he stopped to order the stove and pumpman to do the promised work. So, gaily kissing his wife and children, once more Mr. Smith started for the station. As he walked along, with a light and cheerful heart he mused:

"How cheap a thing is happiness, after all, and yet how easy to turn it into misery! If I had given way to my temper this morning I would have gratified a momentary impulse of unreasonable anger and left behind me aching and discouraged hearts. Thank heaven for the influence of the song of bird and scent of flower; and thank heaven, too, for all the gentle influences and sweet affections that can make the most uneventful life a blessing. Dear, good wife! and dear, precious, little children! Thank God, I have left them happy this morning, if I did miss the train."—*The Interior.*

ECLIPSES.

A little cloud

May hide worlds shining in the midnight sky,
And for a moment seem to be their shroud
Unto the gazer's eye.

A skiff's small sail

May from its owner screen a glorious view,
May curtain half the heavens, and be a veil
Unto the ocean blue.

The little moon

Can cover up sometimes the Source of Light,
And turn the brightness of a world too soon
Into untimely night.

An infant's hand

Can shut day's glories from its darkened eye—
So Self or Care before the Soul may stand
To hide Eternity.

WILLIAM MCGILL.

APROPOS OF SAMUEL ROGERS.

Rogers' personal appearance at once challenged attention. Carlyle tells us of his pale head, white, bare and cold as snow, of his large blue eyes, cruel, sorrowful, and of his sardonic shelf chin. When such an one added a look of scorn and emitted a bitter jest, Diogenes seems revived for our contemplation. He appears to us at a distance as a passionless man, with an unpleasing superiority of a certain sort over more impulsive natures. Not a man that excites the slightest approach to hero-worship or a desire to imitate him. "His God was harmony, sitting on a lukewarm cloud," said witty Mrs. Norton. "I never could *laak myself* into a feeling of affection or admiration for him," says Lady Dufferin in a letter to Mr. Hayward, and then she continues: "To tell the truth, there was a certain *unreality* in him which repelled me. I have heard him say many graceful things, but few kind ones, and he never seemed to me thoroughly in earnest save in expressing contempt or dislike." Mrs. Norton considered that his tastes preponderated over his passions. She adds, he "defrayed the expenses of his tastes as other men make outlay for the gratification of their passions;" and continues: "All within limit of reason, he did not squander more than won the affection of his Seraglio, the Nine Muses, nor bet upon Pegasus. . . . he did nothing rash. I am sure Rogers, as a baby, never fell down *unless he was pushed*."—*Temple Bar.*

A NOTABLE HYMNIST.

There has recently passed away at his quiet country home in Nova Scotia, full of years and honours, if not of more tangible rewards, a man in many respects one of the most remarkable this country has produced. It seems only fitting that some mention should be made in these columns of one whose position in our literature was as unique as his personality was striking and distinct. In my school-boy days I was wont to attend many missionary meetings, not because I felt any profound personal interest in such religious functions, but because my mother desired my services as escort. As a rule, they seemed in my crude judgment a rather dull form of entertainment. There were occasional bright cases, however, when I felt rewarded for the performance of filial duty by something more than the sweet satisfaction one is supposed always to derive from being virtuous. Of such a gratification I was made sure, if among those upon the platform I observed a form and face that could hardly fail to attract attention anywhere. The form was tall and spare, but sinewy and vigorous, while the marked stoop of the broad shoulders spoke unmistakably of long vigils at the student's desk. The face was that of one who had lived and toiled through three-score years at least, until the abundant hair was whitening fast and the furrows were ploughed in deep. From behind gold-bowed glasses two brilliant eyes looked keenly about them, and the mobile, expressive lips moved often, as though impatient to deliver their message. When the time to speak came there was no hesitation, no long-drawn introduction, but a sudden rush of words that commanded your attention at once, and thenceforward there was no fear of its wandering from the speaker. Shrewd mother-wit, unhackneyed pathos, unforced eloquence, profound erudition, thrilling dramatic fervour, these were the qualities that made Silas T. Rand, the Mic-mac missionary of Nova Scotia, an ever-welcome figure at the missionary meeting.

A few lines of biography will help to a better understanding of this remarkable man. Born in a log cabin in the year 1810, the fifth in a double family of twenty-two children, his father a poor farmer, his mother dead when he was but two years old, the early outlook could hardly have seemed more unpromising. Yet there were moments of hope. The mother had been a woman of extraordinary mental vigour, and, considering her circumstances, of surprising general intelligence. She had eagerly devoured all the best literature to which she could gain access. Pope, Young, Gray, Milton, Addison, Steele and Johnson were well known to her. She had even tried her hand at poetry, and shrunk not from essaying the stately hexameter. These tastes and talents were transmitted to her boy, and soon as he could read his passion for books was insatiable. The cross-roads school is his only source of education until he reaches manhood, but he makes the most of it, and studies hard at night, although the day is full of toilsome tasks. At twenty-three he begins the study of Latin at the Wolfville Academy, but can only spare one month for it, and has to resume the mason's hammer and trowel he had so lately laid aside. That is his last experience of schooling. Thenceforward he is self-taught. But just consider his record. Having discovered that he could master Latin without a teacher, he determined to attack other languages. In one week from the day that he took up the Syriac alphabet he could with little difficulty translate the New Testament in that difficult tongue. His next victory was over Hebrew. Then followed, in astonishing succession, Greek, both ancient and modern, French, German, Italian, Spanish and others to the number of thirteen in all. Moreover, this knowledge was no mere superficial smattering. It was critical and thorough, as the acceptance of articles in the French language by leading Paris periodicals abundantly proves.

But his greatest achievement in this direction remains yet to be mentioned. His heart was moved by the spiritual destitution of the Mic-mac Indians of Nova Scotia. Mainly at his own risk and expense he went among them as a missionary some forty years ago. Not only did he seek to save their souls from perdition, but to rescue their language from oblivion. Enduring every possible form of privation, persevering in the face of every imaginable obstacle, he toiled away with the zeal of a Judson for souls and of a John Eliot for words. The success of the spiritual side of his work can hardly be measured here, but of the philological side there is sufficient evidence in a collection of no less than 40,000 Mic-mac words, from which a dictionary is now being prepared and printed at the cost of the Government of Canada.

Remarkable as this record is it does not exhaust Dr. Rand's (for the universities conferred upon him both D.D. and LL.D.) achievements. There is another phase yet, and it is of this I desire to write more particularly. Latin was his first love, and it remained his favourite tongue. Of mediæval Latin hymnology he made a thorough study. About twenty years ago he made his first attempt at translating hymns into Latin, beginning with Lyte's beautiful "Abide with me," which he sought to render into the measure of classical hexameter. "Then," to quote his own words, "I studied the hymnology of the earlier and middle ages of the Christian Church. I learned the reasons why the writers of Gospel hymns deserted the old heathen masters of song. New hopes, new thoughts and aspirations could not be shackled by the arbitrary and unnatural restraints of heathen classics. The new wine could not be confined in the old, worn-out bottles. It burst the bottles without being itself lost, but gaining much by the change. Charmed as I had always been by