

THE SON OF AN EMPIRE AND A NATION

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LIFE'S A RAILROAD.

Life's a railroad. Hurry on!
Always keep a-going;
Never stop to look at flowers
By the roadside growing.
Never think of anything
But your present hurry,
What if you should lose a train?
Wouldn't you be sorry?

What's the use of sighing so
After beauty, lying,
Half a sleep beneath the trees
Where the winds are dying:
Where, through winding cattle-paths,
Creep the lazy hours,
And the slow-paced seasons walk
O'er unconscious flowers?

Beauty changes with the times,
Once she chose her shelter
In the shadowy solitudes,
Lest the sun should melt her.
Stronger breathed, she dashed on,
Now, from town to city,
In a locomotive's shape,
Nothing half so pretty.

Life was once a trodden path,
Where the travellers cheery
Spoke to all they chanced to meet,
Or would rest, if weary,
Rest is now quite obsolete;
Sips of slumber take you,
Careless who beside you sits,
Norwalk draws will wake you.

Life's a railroad. Hurry on!
Always keep a-going!
Never stop to look at flowers
By the roadside growing,
Never mind what's on the track;—
On—though headlong—faster!
If the engine Progress stops,
That's the great disaster!

THE IRON WILL OF A FATHER.

"Fanny, I've but one word more to say on the subject. If you marry that fellow I'll have nothing to do with you. I've said it; and you may be assured that I'll adhere to my determination."

Thus spoke, with a frowning brow and a stern eye, the father of Fanny Crawford, while the maiden sat with eyes bent upon the floor.

"He's a worthless, good-for-nothing fellow," rejoined the father; "and if you marry him you wed a life of misery. Don't come back to me—for I will own you the day you take his name. I've said it, and my decision is unalterable."

Bill Fanny made no answer, but sat like a statue. "Lay to heart what I have said and make your decision, girl." And with these words Mr. Crawford turned from the presence of his daughter.

On that evening Fanny Crawford left her father's house, and was secretly married to a young man named Logan, whom in spite of all his faults she tenderly loved.

When this fact became known to Mr. Crawford, he only repeated this threat of utterly disowning his daughter; and he meant what he said—for he was a man

to the love she believed him to bear for her, Fanny ventured home; she was rudely repulsed, and told that she no longer had a father. These cruel words fell upon her heart, and ever after rested there, an oppressive weight.

Logan was a young mechanic, with a good trade, and the ability to earn a comfortable living. But Mr. Crawford's objection to him was well founded, and it would have been much better for Fanny if she had permitted it to influence her; for the young man was idle in his habits, and Mr. Crawford too clearly saw that idleness would lead to dissipation. The father had hoped that his threat to disown his child would have deterred her from taking the step he so strongly disapproved. He had, in fact, made his threat as a last effort to save her from a union that would, inevitably, lead to unhappiness; but having made it, his stubborn and offended pride caused him to adhere with stern inflexibility to his word.

When Fanny went from under her father's roof, the old man was left alone; the mother of his only child had been many years dead. For her father's sake as well as for her own, did Fanny wish to return. She loved her parent with a most earnest affection, and thought of him as sitting gloomy and companionless in that home so long made light and cheerful by her voice and smile. Hours and hours would she lie awake at night thinking of her father, and weeping for the estrangement of his heart from her. Still there was in her bosom an everliving hope that he would relent; and to this she clung, though he passed her in the street without looking at her, and steadily denied her admission, when, in the hope of some change in his stern purpose, she would go to his house and seek to gain an entrance.

As the father had predicted, Logan added, in the course of a year or two, dissipation to idle habits, and neglect of his wife to both. They had gone to house-keeping in a small way, when first married, and had lived comfortably enough for some time; but Logan did not like work, and made every excuse he could find to take a holiday or to be absent from the shop. The effect of this was insufficient income. Debt came, with its mortifying and harassing accompaniments, and furniture had to be sold to pay those who were not disposed to wait. With two little children, Fanny was removed by her husband into a cheap boarding-house, after their things were taken and sold. The company into which she was here thrown was far from being agreeable; but this would have been no source of unhappiness in itself. Cheerfully would she have breathed the incongenial atmosphere, if there had been nothing in the conduct of her husband to awaken feelings of anxiety. But alas! there was much to create unhappiness here; idle days were more frequent, and the consequences of idle days more and more serious. From his work he would come home sober and cheerful; but after spending a day in idle company, or in the woods gunning, a sport of which he was fond, he would meet his wife with a sullen and dissatisfied aspect, and, too often, in a state little above intoxication.

"I'm afraid thy son-in-law is not doing very well, friend Crawford," said a plain-spoken Quaker to the father of Mrs. Logan, after the young man's habits began to show themselves too plainly in his appearance.

Mr. Crawford knit his brows, and drew his lips closely together.

"Hast thou seen young Logan lately?"

"I don't know the young man," replied Mr. Crawford, with an impatient motion of his head.

"Don't know thy own son-in-law—the husband of thy daughter?"

"I have no son-in-law—no daughter!" said Crawford, with stern emphasis.

"Frances was the daughter of thy wedded wife

"But I have disowned her. I forewarned her of the consequences if she married that young man. I told her that I would cast her off for ever, and I have done it."

"But friend Crawford, thee has done wrong."

"I've said it, and I'll stick to it."

"But thee has done wrong, friend Crawford," repeated the Quaker.

"Right or wrong, it is done, and I will not recall the act. I gave her fair warning; but she took her own course, and now she must abide the consequences. When I say a thing, I mean it. I never eat my words."

"Friend Crawford," said the Quaker, in a steady voice, and with his calm eyes fixed upon the face of the man he addressed, "thee was wrong to say what thee did; thee had no right to cast off thy child. I saw her to-day, passing slowly along the street; her dress was thin and faded, but not so thin and faded as her pale young face. Ah! if thee could have seen the sadness of that countenance. Friend Crawford she is thy child still; thee cannot disown her."

"I never change," replied the resolute father.

"She is the child of thy beloved wife, now in heaven, friend Crawford."

"Good morning!" And Crawford turned and walked away.

"Rash words are bad enough," said the Quaker to himself; "but how much worse is it to abide by rash words after there has been time for reflection and repentance."

Crawford was troubled by what the Quaker had said, but more troubled by what he saw a few minutes afterwards, as he walked along the street, in the person of his daughter's husband. He met the young man, supported by two others, so much intoxicated that he could not stand alone. And in this state he was going home to his wife—to Fanny.

The father clenched his hands, shut his teeth firmly together, muttered an imprecation upon the head of Logan, and quickened his pace homewards. Try as he would, he could not shut out from his mind the pale, faded countenance of his child, as described by the Quaker, nor help feeling an inward shudder at the thought of what she must suffer on meeting her husband in such a state.

"She has only herself to blame," he said, as he struggled with his feelings. "I forewarned her; I gave her to understand clearly what she had to expect; my word is passed, I have said it, and that ends the matter; I am no childish trifler. What I say I mean."

Logan had been from home all day, and what was worse, had not been, as his wife was well aware, at the shop for a week. The woman, with whom they were boarding, came into her room during the afternoon, and, after some hesitation and embarrassment, said—

"I am sorry to tell you, Mrs. Logan, that I shall want you to give up your room after this week. You know I have had no money from you for nearly a month, and, from the way your husband goes on, I see little prospect of being paid anything more. If I was able, for your sake, I would not say a word; but I am not, Mrs. Logan, and therefore must, in justice to myself and family, require you to get another boarding-house."

Mrs. Logan answered only with tears. The woman tried to soften what she had said and then went away.

Not long after this, Logan came stumbling up the stairs, and opening the door, of his room, staggered in, and threw himself heavily upon the bed. Fanny looked at him a few moments, and then crouching down, and covering her face with her hands,

by her father, wronged by her husband, destitute, and about to be thrust from the poor home into which she had shrunk faint and weary, it seemed as if hope were gone for ever. While she suffered thus, Logan lay in a drunken sleep. Arousing herself at last, she removed his boots and coat, and drew a pillow under his head, and threw a coverlet over him. She then sat down and wept again. The tea-bell rang, but she did not go to the table. Half an hour afterwards, the landlady came up to the door and kindly enquired if she would not have some food sent up to her room.

"Only a little bread and milk for Henry," was replied.

"Let me send you a cup of tea," urged the woman.

"No, thank you. I do not wish anything tonight."

The woman went away, feeling troubled. From her heart she pitied the suffering young creature, and it had cost her a painful struggle to do what she had done; but the pressing nature of her own circumstances required her to be rigidly just. Notwithstanding Mrs. Logan had declined having anything, she sent a cup of tea and something to eat; but they remained untasted.

On the next morning Logan was sober, and his wife informed him of the notice which their landlady had given. He was angry, and used harsh language towards the woman. Fanny defended her, and had the harsh language transferred to her own head.

The young man appeared as usual at the breakfast table, but Fanny had no appetite for food, and did not go down. After breakfast, Logan went to the shop, intending to go to work, but found his place supplied by another journeyman, and himself thrown out of employment, with but a few shillings in his pocket, a month's boarding due, and his family in need of almost every comfort. From the shop he went to a tavern, took a glass of liquor, and sat down to look over the newspapers and think what he should do. There he met an idle journeyman, who, like himself, had lost his situation. A fellow feeling made them communicative and confidential.

"If I was only a single man," said Logan, "I would not care. I could easily shift for myself."

"Wife and children! Yes, there's the rub," returned the companion. "A journeyman mechanic is a fool to get married."

"Then you and I are both fools," said Logan.

"No doubt of it. I came to that conclusion, in regard to myself, long and long ago. Sick wife, hungry children, and four or five backs to cover; no wonder a poor man's nose is ever on the grinding-stone. For my part I am sick of it. When I was a single man I could go where I pleased, and do what I pleased; and I always had money in my pocket. Now I am tied down to one place, and grumbled at eternally; and if you were to shake me from here to the Navy-yard, you wouldn't get a six-pence out of me. That is a fact I'm sick of it."

"So am I; but what is to be done? I don't believe I can get work in town."

"I know you can't, but there is plenty of work and good wages to be had in Charleston or New Orleans."

Logan did not reply, but looked intently into his companion's face.

"I'm sure my wife would be a great deal better off if I were to clear out and leave her. She has plenty of friends, and they'll not see her want."

Logan still looked at his fellow journeyman.

"And your wife would be taken back under her father's roof, where there is enough and to spare. Of course she would be happier than she is now."