

The Graduation of Consolation.

"You're in luck at last, Tom," said the harbor master. "Here's a government position begging you to take it. What do you say to that, my boy?"

"Is it anything I can fill, sir?" "None better," was the confident reply. "What do you think of being a bank clerk, Tom?"

The bright look faded from the young man's face as he answered, a touch of quiet dignity in his tone. "You know I've no schooling, Captain. Never had a chance to get any, but—"

"Hold on, old fellow!" interrupted the genial captain. "You don't think for a minute that I want to make one of those perfumed dandies out of you, do you? No indeed. Your bank runs round the freight track, and your duty is to patrol it, to keep our energetic citizens from using the new track for a dumping ground."

There have been several accidents already. Our poor chap, a trolley driver, is lying in the hospital with a smashed head and arm. Such things won't happen once you are installed,—that is if you'll take it, Tom."

"That I will," was the vigorous assent. You'll never know all this means to me, Captain."

"The terms are small to begin with, only forty dollars a month, but it will lead to something better. Who knows but that some day a fortune may be cast over, and it will make yours."

"Mine is made now, Captain," said the grateful Tom, joyously. "You know how much has been again me. Now I can see my way to—"

"Getting married?" suggested the captain blithely.

The newly appointed clerk blushed like a girl, and stammered "stranger things have happened, sir."

The harbor master's voice lost its bantering tone. "The man who risked his life to save another man's child," he said, "brings better than riches to his own home. God bless you, Tom, and the girl of your choice. I wish I could do more to show you how I feel about little Richard."

"Don't mention it," pleaded Tom. "It was the most natural thing in the world that your boy should be hanging round the water, and that I should be near to fish him out when he tumbled in. Don't speak of it again, Captain."

"Well, I won't since you don't like it, but I'll never forget it," he added as Tom fairly ran away from his expressions of gratitude.

He went his way blithely, the sunshine falling on the shabbiest coat ever worn by a public official. Not a clerk or cashier in the banks he passed but would have repudiated any connection with his craft, and yet as he passed them by his heart was filled with pity for them.

"There you are, poor chaps, shut up in caskets, long before you have any need to be," he reflected. "Now, my bank—but here I am!" Turning down a side street he paused before a door set in a brick wall, and delivered a message that was promptly answered by a tall young girl, who welcomed him with a radiant smile.

"You've had a stroke of luck, Tom," she questioned eagerly.

"Now, Emmie, how did you guess?" "Your eyes gave it away; look Tom."

She held up a pocket mirror, and reflected in it Tom saw a pair of blue eyes, trustful as a child's.

"I didn't think you were vain, Emmie."

"And I haven't any cause to be. But when things go again me I like to look in that little glass and wonder what you saw in me, Tom."

"The glass will never show you all that," he asserted, stoutly. "I just found out for myself, and the question is, can you see anything in me to make you risk taking me for better or worse. Just now it seems better. I have charge of the bank at steady pay, and findings is keepings."

What do you say, Emmie?

"It will be for better always," she said, her eyes shining with love and trust. "All I've got to say, Tom, is that since you found me, I'm one of your perquisites. Findings is keepings you know."

A month later the lovers walked out of St. James, man and wife. Their wedding trip extended over ten blocks, and in less than an hour they were at home. No bank clerk over set up a smaller establishment—two rooms in a tall tenement, up a back yard, but no bank clerk's lady ever entered home than did Emmie. Tom led her through the two rooms, showing her the treasures he had put together for her reception, and finally pausing before a three-cornered glass closet he exclaimed, "Look

here, Emmie! I meant this for a surprise. I won't at a fair long ago."

This was a silver butter dish. While Tom's eyes beamed on her the thrifty housewife tested the metal with a pin, and finding it genuine turned her head away, entreating—

"Take it away, Tom; do put it away. I don't want to give way to pride on my wedding day."

If pride was Emmie's besetting sin, she was often tempted in the weeks and months that followed the happy home-coming. Tom revelled in the joy of homemaking, and every day invested in something that made the young wife wish that people could see it, or that their door opened on the front street, so that passersby might share her admiration of the willow rocker with red ribbon bows and the little work table "set out like any lady's."

To do her justice Emmie bravely resisted her sinful inclination to be over-proud of her possessions, and frequently she exhorted herself sternly, "If you give way in little things, Emmie Robbins, you'll fall before big ones." After she had repeated this exhortation, even the new curtain pole with brass rings that Tom had fitted into the window proved powerless to tempt her.

"That's the last touch," said Tom, falling back to view the effect. "It doesn't seem that anything more can be done, unless it's to set rose bushes between the draperies. I'll go out to the country for them before our wedding anniversary comes round."

Some weeks later the bank clerk came in with the roses, but no Emmie greeted his return. Old Mrs. Jewett, a neighbor, stood at the head of the stairway, and commanded him "to come up easy," adding with stern disapproval as she caught sight of the shrubs in his hands, that she didn't know "what any man wanted prowl'n' round the country after weeds, while a blessed flower was waitin' a father's welcome."

During his absence, Emmie had gone on a much longer journey, even to the borderland 'twixt life and death, and had just returned faint and weary, with a little daughter for Tom.

And now life in the two rooms took on a glorified aspect. Tom roused himself repeatedly from day dreams in which the bundle in Emmie's arms had a prominent part. When the young mother was strong enough to sit up in the willow rocker or plans for the baby's future were eagerly discussed. The choice of a name was also a matter of grave consideration.

"She ought to be named for both of us," declared Tom.

"O, Tom, just imagine the poor little thing being called Tom Emmie!" laughed the mother. "Was there ever such a name?"

"If we'd only had more schooling, Emmie," deplored Tom, "we could see our way to do right by her more clearly. But neither of us ever got a chance."

"But baby will," said Emmie, softly, "and that will make up for our want, husband."

Tom drew a line on the table while turning over this thought in his slow way, and having grasped it he added one of his own.

"You've settled the question, my girl, as neatly as you did the other one. Baby shall have an education. And now what's her name? you'd never guess it, so here goes for a bit of reasoning! If baby makes up for what we lost or didn't get, why then she's consolation—and Consolation is her name."

"But it seems such an odd one! Now if it were Faith or Hope or Charity—"

"Or Prudence or Patience," put in Tom, "all qualities belonging to her mother; but Consolation is for both of us, so if you're willing."

"You can have your way, Tom. What a man you are for making pretty speeches. Do you know why I never look in that little glass now?"

"Maybe it's because you are free of a bigger one."

"You say that, but you know different. I never need to, Tom, nothing goes against me since I married you. Even if baby doesn't have all them shining qualities of mine, if she has her father's brave heart and loving nature, she'll be what will she be, Tom?"

"Just what she is now—the bank clerk's baby," laughed Tom.

Consolation proved worthy of her name, every day she added a trifle to the sun of her parents' happiness;

the roses in the window were not fairer or fresher than the winsome baby, with Tom's blue eyes, and a quick bright smile—a tiny duplicate of Emmie's.

The idea of giving her a thorough education became a leading one. Before she was six months' old, Tom had become familiar with the working of a kindergarten; and by the time she celebrated her first birthday, with Emmie's assistance and a school course laid out on the table he had traced every step of her progress, from the first uncertain movements in the baby class, to the proud moment when, gowned in white, she delivered the valedictory.

No bank clerk's baby was ever happier than Consolation, and certainly no millionaire was happier than Tom. Every day some delightful surprise awaited him; some new instance of baby's cleverness.

One evening he brought home a parcel, and untying it, produced a pair of shining rubber boots that made Emmie scream with merriment.

"And Consolation will soon be two, and every day she'll be getting up to five; it will be no time till you see her going off in the shiny boots, on her way to school, wet days. When she does go, she'll want a little lunch, won't she?"

"Yes," assented unsuspecting Emmie, thoroughly enjoying this planning ahead; "just a biscuit or two and an apple, or may be an orange."

"An' she'll want something to carry it in, so I bought this," bringing in a tiny basket. "Two covers and handles that swing both ways. Let's see how she'll look. Stand in 'em, Connie."

Connie stood in the boots bravely. "There you are!" shouted the delighted father. "A trifle big, to be sure. Now, here's the basket! There you're off, Emmie, did you ever see such a child? Ain't she plucky?"

"That she is," said Emmie, catching the tiny traveler just in time, the boots having entered into a conspiracy to secure her downfall.

"Doesn't it seem odd, Tom? You and I haven't a set of features between us, an' Consolation is really good-looking."

For answer he drew the child to him and studied her baby face with such love and pride beaming on his own, that Emmie felt it her duty to remonstrate.

"You mustn't set too much store by her, Tom; after all, she's not really ours. She's only lent by the Lord, husband."

"I won't dispute that," he said reverently. "We'll pay the interest regular in raising her for His service, and maybe," with a touch of wistful speculation, "the principal won't be called for, in our time."

"Why, Tom, you're beginning to talk like a real bank clerk."

"If I'd the learning, I might have been a real one."

"Be content as you are," she admonished gently.

"I'm more than content. I often wonder what I've done to deserve such happiness. When I'm down on the track an' there isn't anything going on, I look at the water and it kind of preaches to me till my heart is full."

"Yes," assented the wife, leaning forward eagerly, touched by the home eloquence, though quite unconscious that her husband was one of the "poets sown by nature." Yes, an' then, Tom."

"Why then I think of what I can do for Him, if I can give any one a helping hand for His sake, and to-day—"

"Well, Tom, to-day."

"I was thinking, Emmie, if we could take in that little orphan, the trolley driver's boy, it might be the saving of him. Just think, wife, a baby not much older than our Connie, and with such a set! It's a shame for the town to put a child in such hands—two dollars a week is dear for starving the life an' spirit out of a child; but fearful cheap for an immortal soul. Can we help him, Emmie? Can we take him in without wronging Consolation?"

The answer came promptly.

"We'd be wronging Connie more if we let her stand in the orphan's light. Take him in, Tom, and may God do by our child as we do by the stranger's."

"Amen," murmured Tom, tenderly lifting the baby, who had fallen asleep during this serious conversation. He tucked her into the little crib, and returned to his wife, "now for ways and means, Emmie."

"There isn't any need to talk about them just now. There's enough to begin with. I've been laying by again the time Consolation will be five. Yes," catching a knowing smile, "I'm foolish about her, too; I laid out to have six lawn aprons with lace trimming, and two merino frocks, one blue and one red, with four plain white for summer wear. That money will buy what the little stranger needs, and the Lord will provide for Connie."

Prophetic words uttered with unconscious pathos! The Lord did indeed provide.

"I'll get things ready to-morrow, and you can bring him home as soon as you like. How did you come to hear of him, Tom?"

"Well you see, his father's misfortune seemed like the cause of my good fortune, so when I heard of his death, I hunted round till I found the boy."

"Ah, Tom," with a loving smile, "your perquisites 'll never make you rich; findin's is keepin's again."

Two hours later silence reigned in the little home in the tall tenement. The moonbeams slanted in across the floor, and seemed to turn whiter with pity as a shadow flitted by the parents and laid its cold fingers on the baby's throat.

A hoarse, gurgling cry followed by a frightened exclamation, brought the sleeping father from viewing a dream picture of a fair, young girl in graduating gown, receiving her degree rolled in a gold ring from the trolley driver's boy, to the little crib, where the future valedictorian was struggling for life.

"Run for the doctor, Tom, while I get up the fire and heat the water; don't lose a minute."

Needless counsel, as he was already down the stairs on his way. The doctor came promptly, and all that skill and love could do was done—in vain. Before morning broke the struggle was over—the loan was returned with two years' interest.

"Don't take on like that, Tom, don't," pleaded the young mother in a voice shrill with pain, yet anxious to comfort. "It's flying in the face of Providence."

"I can't help it, Emmie. I meant to do so well by her." His glance strayed from the rigid little figure to the boots and lunch basket, and grief broke forth anew. "She looked so cunning in them last night, but now she'll never need them. I meant to give her such an education."

"Don't, Tom," laying her hands caressingly on his shoulders. Then brightening with a new idea. "Why, husband, she has it now; she began and finished at the same time; when the gates swung open our girl graduated."

The sun rose merrily and peeping in at the window grew brighter still with the kindly purpose of warming hearts numbed by sorrow. With a broad ribbon of golden light it drew the parents from their dead child and led them in spirit to the source of eternal day, where they sought and found an immortal Consolation.—Elizabeth Lyons, in Donahoe's Magazine.

A BABY CHANGED.

The Mother Tells How It Was Accomplished.

"A wonderful change," is the verdict of a lady correspondent, who writes us about her little one. "I take pleasure," writes Mrs. R. B. Bickford, of Glen Sutton, Que., "in certifying to the merits of Baby's Own Tablets, as I have found them a such and reliable remedy. My baby was troubled with indigestion, and was teething and cross and restless, and the use of the Tablets made a wonderful change. I think the timely use of Baby's Own Tablets might save many a dear little life, and I would recommend mothers to keep them in the house."

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MONKS MAY NOT LEAVE.

Apparently, in spite of all reports to the contrary, the monks of Grande Chartreuse have not decided to leave France. The Procurator-General has become a secular priest, so as to keep in hand the temporalities. The monks will apply for authorization, and should it be refused, will migrate, half to Austria, half to England, to which latter country their valuable library has been already sent.

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Our Boys And Girls.

HONOR AND LOVE MOTHER.

Have you a mother? If so, honor and love her. If she is aged, do all in your power to cheer her declining years. Her hair may have bleached, her eyes may have dimmed, her brow may contain deep and unsightly furrows; her cheeks may be sunken, but you should not forget the holy love and tender care she has had for you.

In years gone by she has kissed away from your cheek the troubled tear; she has soothed and petted you when all else appeared against you; she has watched over and nursed you with a tender care known only to a mother; she has been proud of your success. You may be despised by all around you, yet that loving mother stands as an apologist for all your shortcomings. With all that disinterested affection, would it not be ungrateful in you if in her declining years you failed to reciprocate her love, and honor her as your best friend? We have no respect for a man or woman who neglects an aged mother. If you have a mother, love her, and do all in your power to make her happy.

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