



**AN UNEXPECTED WITNESS.**

A TRUE STORY.  
BY D. O. S. LOWELL.

In a long, low bar-room in the eastern part of Maine, sat a motley company of men, composed of farmers, lumbermen who had come out of the woods to pass the Sabbath, tradesmen who had left their stores to be managed by their clerks, mechanics who had come in to lighten their purses of their weekly wages, and professional loafers who were in their accustomed place of business.

It was a wild and blustering night of mid-winter, and out upon the snowdrifts, already piled around the door, and growing to still greater heights as the bleak North wind swept down the now deserted street, the firelight cast a most inviting glow.

There were no curtains to the windows, and with reason, too; for, on a sharp and stinging winter night like this, the shrewd landlord well knew the potent influence upon the casual passer-by, of a vision of blazing backlogs, a steaming punch, and a "merrie company" for the Maine law had never been dreamed of then, and not only every idler whiled away his time with the aid of Old Jamaica or Medford rum, but even the village parson never called at the houses of the well-to-do but that a decanter of the choicest liquor was set before him, of which he would partake without a thought of harm.

A physician once told the writer that in looking over some ancient account-books for material to be employed in the history of a township, he found the charges in an ordinary grocery store against the best families of a New England village, ran much as follows: One day there would be entered a gallon of rum and a quarter of tea; in another week, a gallon of rum; the next week a gallon of rum and a quarter of tea again. "Thus," said he, "it has always been out of rum first."

"My wife's father," said the same gentleman, "was a clergyman, but always between his sermons, at noon, he used to go down to the tavern and fortify for the afternoon effort. He never denied his liking for liquor, though he was never seen with it in his hand. One day, while seated in a store, he heard several men of his parish in succession call for strong drink, on the plea of a bad cold, sick headache, weak stomach, etc. Resolved to rebuke such hypocrisy, and at once walk up to the bar, and said in a ringing voice: "Mr. , I want a glass of rum, because I love it!"

That was honest, no doubt; but, alas! the green earth covers the blotted forms of not a few who inherited their fathers' tastes but not their moral sense or power of will.

Down the main street of the village, slowly forcing his way through the fast-forming drifts, came a traveler in a single-sleigh. His horse bore evidence of hard driving, and as he reined up before the door, the poor brute stumbled and fell. A loud shout from the driver brought out the host to ascertain the cause.

"What's wanted?" he cried, as he stood upon the threshold and peered out into the darkness.

"First, I want you to pick my horse up and put him in the stable," replied a deep bass voice, whose tones were muffled by the thick folds of a huge "comforter" which enveloped the traveler's head and face; "then I'd like a glass of hot rum, a seat by the fire, a good supper, and a clean bed."

"Say, yon fellers!" bawled the landlord, returning to the bar-room, "stop yer eternal gossip' for about five minutes and lend a hand, can't ye? There's a chap outside as wants his horse picked up, so he says. Darned if I know what he means by it, but I'll take more'n one man to lift a horse, anyway—so be lively boys, and I'll stand treat when ye come back."

No more magical words could possibly have been spoken. The bar-room fairly emptied itself into the front yard, while the landlord chuckled to himself, and proceeded to water a bottle of gin for the coming "treat."

The rescuing party found the benumbed stranger still in his seat, grasping the reins, while his jaded horse lay at full length in the snow, too tired to even struggle.

"Hain't froze, he ye?" said one of the men, advancing to the sleigh.

"Don't know," replied the stranger. "I can tell better by and by." With that he climbed out somewhat stiffly, and moved toward the open door of the tavern.

He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, and even through his thick and clumsy garments

one could see that his athletic frame was of excellent proportions; but there was something rather queer about his gate, as though his feet had been chilled during his ride.

Ready hands in the meanwhile cared for the tired steed, which was freed from the harness, encouraged to find his feet, and then handed over to the hostler to be groomed, fed and bedded.

When the villagers returned to the bar-room, they found the new-comer seated in a corner of the huge fireplace, with one hand stretched out over the blaze, while the other held a smoking glass which the ready landlord had just given him.

"Come fur to-day?" inquired the host.

"A bout fifty miles, I guess."

"That so? Don't live round here?"

- "No."
- "Live on the Kennebec?"
- "No."
- "Androscoggin, maybe?"
- "I'm from Oxford county."
- "There now, Jim Fogg, broke in one of the party, "give us that Oxford county bear story you was braggin' on about a minute ago. And look sharp, old feller! If you can fool the rest of us, ye can't play no games on a 'raal inhabitant."

Somewhat modified by this appeal, Jim crowded an enormous quid of tobacco into his cheek, chewed it nervously for a few seconds, ejected a small Niagara into the fire, and began as follows:

"Wal, jest afore you driv up here an' hollered out—"

"Hold on right there!" cried Nate Hackins, whose mouth had been watering for some time past and could wait no longer—"jest after he driv up an' hollered out, I herd' sunthin' about a treat, but I hain't seen nothin' of it yet."

A noisy laugh greeted this interruption, in which the landlord joined as he took down the watered gin.

"The chap that was chawed was named Reub' Harris. He was as likely a young feller as ever swung an axe, and any gal'd 'a' felt proud of him in them days. His father'd been one o' the fust settlers an' this boy'd growned up among the stumps an' wild critters an' was jes' as tough as a young turkie."

"Wal, one Saturday night when Reub was about nineteen, he done the chores up arly, put on his best Sunday-go-to-meetin' clo'es, an' off he went sparkin' nigh on ter seven miles thro' the woods. He had a bran new pair of boots that squeaked like a possessed. He crammed some stockin's into these an' took um in his land; for he wasn't so all-fired extravagant as ter wear shoes ten mile thro' the woods and scour out the sole leather."

"Look out, Jim!" cried Huckins, "you said seven miles jest afore, an' now you have it ten!"

"Jim curled his lip in supreme scorn.

"So ye think it wouldn't be quite ten miles over an' back, do ye? Well, I can say, I'm mighty feared that gin has struck ter yer head."

That battery being silenced, Jim again resumed without further interruption:

"Reub carried his boots and stockin's till he come in sight of the house where his gal lived, an' then he put um on an' walked in so innocent and careless like, you'd a thought for all the world he was born with boots on."

"As ter the sparkin', this here man's sister's mother-in-law what told him as told me, didn't say nothin' about it 'cept that I should judge they broke the Sabbath quite a considerable piece afore Reub he guessed he'd better be a-goin', but I don't have a chance to come agin. But he got away at last an' soon's he found himself a good safe distance off he tuck his squeakin' boots an' stockin's under his arm an' struck a bee line for home whistlin' the 'Gal I left behind me'—an' so breakin' the Sabbath still further," craftily added Jim, thus effectually cutting off criticism.

"Twa'n't so very dark, whether 'cause of the moon, or that the mornin' wasn't a great ways into the mornin'; but Reub he got along at a pretty good rate, tho' I calculate not quite so fast as when he come. It wouldn't be nateral."

"There wa'n't no 'raal road in them days (Jim meant a real road and not a railroad, for the latter was unheard of in his time), only a narrow path, an' a blazed tree here and there, somethin' like a guideboard without any writin' on it; but Reub had been over the ground so much he could ha' found his way in the darkest night as ever winked with his eyes shut."

Whether Jim intended to attribute the above optical phenomenon to a personified Night, or whether he meant to connect the close eyes with Reub's, his auditors never sought to inquire. They grasped the main idea and the story proceeded:

"Jest how long the young chap had been a-goin' he didn't rightly know himself, when all of a sudden he heard sunthin' half way between a snort and a growl, an' right there in the path afore him stood what made his hair kinder rise."

"He wa'n't no coward, Reub wa'n't, an' never had the name on't; an' if he'd 'a' had a good gun, or an axe, or even a jack knife he'd a' felt mighty diffident; but the only shadder of a weapon that the boy had was his shoes an' stockin's, an' then was under his arm an' not over handy for kickin'."

"Right there in the path, as I said, she stood, a growlin' an' a snuffin'—a she bear an' her two cubs. 'Twas a white-face, tho', which is as cross in thur way as a white-faced hornet is 'mong stingin' reptiles."

"Reub thought his sparkin' days had come to a sudden stop right thar in the woods, for I needn't tell none o' ye 'bout a bear's temper when she has cubs—she'd tackle a sea sarge-pent gin her the chance."

"But all of a sudden she gin another snort and jumped into the clump o' bushes close by, an' o' course her cubs follered. Reub could hear um a crackin' away through the brush, an' jest hoped they'd keep up that proceedin' for the nex' ten days. But he couldn't b'lieve no sech good news, an' 'twas lucky he didn't, so he took the road for home as if the ole boy was arter him, lookin' all the time for a tree fit ter climb into if he was 'bleezed ter do it."

"All at once, when he was kinder makin' up his mind, an' he was mornin' from his own shadder, an' havin' a good skeer for

"THE OLD WHITE-FACED SINNER WATCHED HER CHANCE AN' CAUGHT HIM BY THE HEEL."

"Who wants ter play games?" snapped out the man addressed as Jim Fogg, testily.

"Guess I know what I'm talkin' about. A chap told me whose sister's mother-in-law married the man that—"

"Killed the rat that eat the malt, that lay in the house that Jack built," interrupted the wag of the party.

Fogg was an inveterate story teller, and had a reputation as such which extended for many miles around. Indeed, he was reputed, either justly or unjustly, to have manufactured several thrilling tales from very scanty material, or from none whatever; and it was generally believed that no anecdote ever lost anything in passing through his hands—or to speak more precisely, his mouth.

Hints of the above nature, with very broad points, were often flung at Fogg himself, after the manner of the rustic Yankee, but they produced no greater effect than a brief irritation; and laugh as they might about the active imagination which Jim possessed, the villagers liked to listen to his yarns as well as he liked to spin them.

Perhaps, however, the story in question would have been deferred just then, out of spite, had not the stranger interposed:

"Have you an Oxford county story? Well, really, I would like to hear it. It would seem quite like home, and give me a still better appetite for supper."

"All right boys. Step right up and wet yer whiskers. There's nothin' mean about me if Hickins does seem to think so?"

"Cries of "No! No!" rent the air and there was a general rush toward the bar. Jim Fogg came last, after throwing away his quid.

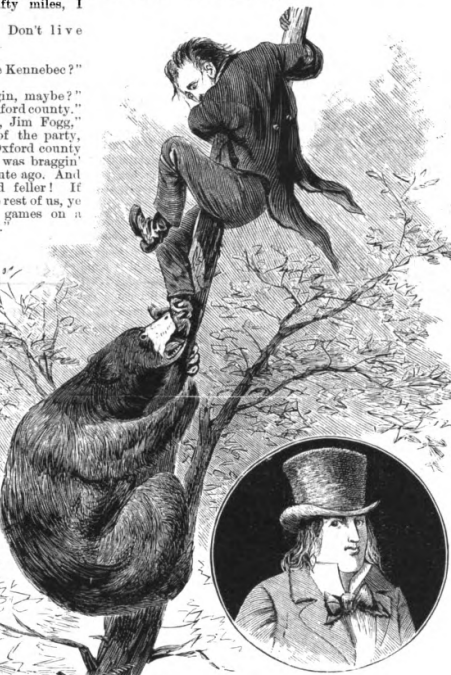
"Guess I'll take another drink to pay for my terbacker, seein' there's nothin' mean about ye," said Jim, holding out his quickly drained glass and winking at the boys.

"That must be mighty fine gin," he continued, "its just as smooth—as ice!"

The landlord grinned a little as he proceeded to fill Jim's glass. Did Fogg suspect the trick? He looked very innocent, returned to his seat, and proceeded to fill a pipe as he resumed his story:

"Jest afore you arriv, Mister, the boys had been tellin' some rather tough yarns about bears that they didn't believe themselves, when I tole 'em as how I could go one better 'n that an' it should be jest as solum a fac' as that I'll git a blowin' up if I ain't ter home afore 'leven o'clock. I know it's true, 'cause I've seed' the man whose sister's mother-in-law married the chap as got chawed up so everlastingly."

"Oh, cut it short, Jim!" cried one of his tormentors, to which the narrator deigned no other reply than to pause and light his pipe, when he fixed his eye upon the stranger and continued:





THE GOLDEN ARGOSY.

BY "TRADLES."

Here comes the ship Argo. How precious her cargo. We place no embargo. On her, our port's free!

HELPING HIMSELF;

OR GRANT THORNTON'S AMBITION.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

Author of "Do and Dare," "Hector's Inheritance," "The Store Boy," "Work and Win," the "Ragged Dick Series," "Fattened Tom Series," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JUSTICE TRIUMPHS.

MR. GRAHAM turned to the broker and addressed further remarks to him. "Your statement that four hundred dollars remained to be accounted for, led me to conclude that they would be found in the possession of the party who had abstracted the others."

"This was an unexpected stroke. Ford did not speak, but kept his eyes fixed upon the detective in evident panic. "I have just come from Mr. Ford's room," he resumed. "These are what I found there."

"They are mine," she said; "but I cannot believe Willis took them." "I did not," said Ford, hoarsely, but his eyes were downcast.

"Will you account for their being in your room, then, Mr. Ford?" inquired the broker, sternly.

"That boy must have put them there. I know nothing of them. I am as much surprised as you are."

"We have had enough of this, Mr. Ford," said the broker, coldly. "Your guilt is evident. In robbing your step-mother you have committed a serious crime, but in attempting to throw the guilt upon an innocent boy, you have been guilty of an offense still more detestable, and one which I cannot forgive. You cannot remain in my employment another day. If you will call at the office in the morning I will pay you salary to the end of the month. That will end all relations between us."

Willis Ford looked like a convicted criminal. For the moment all his hardihood and bravado deserted him. "Can this be true, Willis?" wailed his step-mother. "Is it possible that you took my bonds, and would have left me to an old age of poverty?"

"No," answered Ford, with a return of his usual assurance. "I am as innocent as a babe unborn. I am the victim of a conspiracy. As Mr. Reynolds is determined to shield his favorite by throwing the blame on me, I must submit. The time will come when he will acknowledge my innocence. Mother, I will satisfy you later, but I do not believe you will think me guilty. Gentlemen, I bid you all good evening."

No one spoke as he withdrew from the room, and not even Morrison offered to follow him.

When he was fairly out of the room, the broker turned to Morrison.

"Mr. Morrison," he said, "I have a question or two to put to you. I think you will find it to your interest to answer correctly."

Do you still maintain that these bonds were given you by Grant Thornton?"

"I may as well make a clean breast of it," said Morrison. "They were given me by Willis Ford."

"To satisfy a gambling debt, was it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"I take it for granted you did not know they were stolen?"

"If I had known it I wouldn't have touched them. I might have been suspected of stealing them myself."

"I believe you."

"You're a gentleman!" said Morrison, gratified that his word was accepted.

"Of course you have lost the amount which you considered due you. To be entirely candid with you, I do not feel any sympathy with you. Money won at play must be classed among ill-gotten gains. I hope you will realize this, and give up a discreditable profession."

"I have no doubt your advice is good, sir. Do you want me and Tom any longer?"

"You are at liberty to go. I am indebted to you for coming. You have helped to clear up the mystery of the theft."

"He's a little hard on us, Tom," said Morrison, as they went down the front steps, "but he's treated us like a gentleman. That Ford is a rascal!"

"I think so too," Tom assented.

"And I shall never see a cent of that six hundred dollars," continued Jim Morrison, ruefully.

"If you'll excuse me, I'll go to my own room," said Mrs. Estabrook, pertly. "I want to think quietly of all this."

"Go, by all means," said the broker, courteously. "To-morrow morning your property shall be restored to you."

Next the detective and the telegraph boy withdrew, the latter richer by a five dollar note, which Mr. Reynolds presented him. Johnny's eyes sparkled.

"That will make mother happy," he said. "She'll think I am in luck."

"Keep your eyes open, my boy, and be faithful to your employer, and this won't be the last piece of luck that will come in your way."

When they were alone, Mr. Reynolds turned to Grant, and said kindly, "I congratulate you, Grant, on your complete vindication. Those who have wickedly conspired against you have come to grief, and you come out of the trial unscathed. As I am to part with Willis Ford, though you are not competent to take his place, your duties will be somewhat enlarged, and I will take care that your compensation shall be increased."

"I am afraid, Mr. Reynolds, I already receive more than I earn."

"That may be, but I am only anticipating a little. How much do you pay now?"

"Six dollars a week, sir."

"I will allow you four dollars more, but this additional sum I will keep in my own hands, and credit you with it. It is time you were saving something for future use. Will this be satisfactory to you?"

"You are very kind, Mr. Reynolds," said Grant, gratefully. "I don't know how to thank you."

"Then I will tell you - Be faithful to your duties in the office, and continue your kindness to Herbert."

"Gladly, sir."

Grant decided not to write to his mother about his increase of salary. He preferred to wait till his savings amounted to a considerable sum, and then surprise her by the announcement of his good fortune. In six months, he estimated, he would have rather more than a hundred dollars, and this to the country minister's son seemed a large sum. At any rate, when he was twenty-one he might hope to be the possessor of a thousand dollars. This opened to Grant a brilliant prospect. It was probably all that his father was worth, including all his possessions.

"In spite of my uncle's opposition," thought Grant, "I think I acted wisely in preferring business to college. Now I shall be able to make the family more comfortable."

When Willis Ford called at the office the next morning Grant was gone to the post-office. As he returned he met Ford coming out with a check in his hand.

"So it's you, is it?" sneered Ford, stopping short.

"Yes, Mr. Ford."

"I suppose you are exulting over your victory."

"You are mistaken," said Grant. "It was

not my wish that anything unpleasant should happen."

"I suppose not," said Ford, in an unpleasant tone.

"For some reason you have shown a dislike to me from the first," Grant proceeded. "I don't know why. I have always treated you with respect, and tried to do my duty faithfully."

"You are a little angel, to be sure!"

"Have you any objection to telling me why you dislike me?" he asked.

"Yes, I'll tell you. It is because I see how you are trying to worm yourself into the confidence of Mr. Reynolds. You have plotted against me, and now, thanks to you, I have lost my place."

"I don't consider myself the cause of that, Mr. Ford."

"I do; but you needn't exult too much. I generally pay my debts, and I shan't forget that I owe you. I'll be even with you some day."

So saying he walked off, and Grant returned to his work.

"I can't understand why Mr. Ford should hate me so!" he thought.

CHAPTER XXIV.

STARTLING NEWS.

WILLIS FORD'S feelings were far from enviable when he took leave of the office in which he had long enjoyed an excellent position. He was conscious, though scarcely willing to admit it, that his misfortunes had been brought upon him by his own unwise, not to say criminal, course. None the less, however, was he angry with those whom he connected with the disaster that had come upon him. He had always disliked Grant Thornton. Now he hated him and thirsted for an opportunity to do him a mischief. Next he felt embittered against Mr. Reynolds who had discharged him, though it is hardly possible to see how the broker could have done otherwise. This dislike was increased within a few days, and for this reason.

Ford addressed a letter to Mr. Reynolds, requesting a certificate of good character, which would enable him to procure a new situation.

To this request the broker answered substantially as follows:

"I shall be glad to hear that you have changed your course, and have decided to lead an honest life, but for the same reason that I am not willing to retain you in my own employment, I am unwilling to recommend you without reserve to another business man. If you are willing to refer him to me, on condition that I tell the truth, I will cheerfully testify that you have discharged your office duties to my satisfaction."

"The old fool!" muttered Ford, angrily crushing the letter in his hand. "What use would such a recommendation be to me? Not content with discharging me, he wants to keep me out of employment."

In truth Willis Ford hardly knew where to turn. He had saved no money, and was earning nothing. In this dilemma he turned to his step-mother.

One forenoon, after he knew the broker and Grant would be out of the way, he rang the bell, and inquired for the housekeeper.

Mrs. Estabrook was agitated when she saw her step-son. She did not like to believe that he had robbed her, but it was hard to believe otherwise.

"Oh, Willis!" she said, almost bursting into tears, "how could you take my small savings? I would not have believed you capable of it."

"You don't mean to say, mother," returned Willis, with well-dissembled and reproachful sorrow, "that you believe this monstrous slander?"

"I don't want to believe it, Willis, Heaven knows, but were not the bonds found in your room?"

"I admit it," said Ford, "but how did they get there?"

"Certainly not, mother. I thought you knew me better than that."

"But who, then—" began his stepmother, looking bewildered.

"Who should it be but that boy?"

"Grant Thornton?"

"Yes."

"Have you any proof of this?" asked the housekeeper, eagerly.

"I will tell you what I have found out. I learn that a boy called on the day in question at my room, and asked to see me. Being told that I was out, he asked leave to go up and wait for me. As the servant had no sus-

picion he was allowed to go up. I don't know how long he staid, but no doubt he had the bonds with him, and concealed them where they were found."

"Did you ask for a description of the boy? Was it like Grant?" asked the housekeeper quickly.

"Unfortunately the girl did not take particular notice of him. I have no doubt it was either Grant or the telegraph boy, who seems to have been in the plot."

Now this story was an audacious fiction, and should not have imposed upon a person of ordinary intelligence, but the housekeeper was anxious to believe her step-son innocent, and Grant guilty. She, therefore, accepted it without question, and was loud in her denunciation of that "artful young rascal."

"You ought to tell Mr. Reynolds of this, Willis," she said.

"It would be of no use, mother. He is too strongly prejudiced against me. What do you think? He has refused me a letter of recommendation. What does he care if I starve?" concluded Willis bitterly.

"But I care, Willis. I will not desert you," said Mrs. Estabrook, in a tone of sympathy.

This was just the mood in which Ford desired his step-mother to be. He was desirous of effecting a loan, and after a time succeeded in having transferred to him two of the one-hundred dollar bonds. He tried hard to obtain the five hundred, but Mrs. Estabrook was too prudent and too much attached to her savings to consent to this. Ford had to be satisfied with considerably less.

"Ought I to stay with Mr. Reynolds after he has treated you in this way, Willis?" asked his step-mother, anxiously.

"By all means, mother. You don't want to throw away a good position."

"But it will be hard to see that boy high in Mr. Reynolds' confidence after all his wickedness."

"You must dissemble, mother. Treat him fairly, and watch your opportunity to harm him and serve me. Don't say much about me, for I would do no good, but keep your hold on Reynolds."

"If you think it best, Willis," said his step-mother, not without a feeling of relief, for she was reluctant to relinquish a good home and liberal salary, "I will remain."

"Do so, by all means. We may as well make all we can out of the enemy for Mr. Reynolds has treated me very shabbily. And now I must bid you good bye."

"What are your plans, Willis?"

"I can't tell yet, but I think I shall go West."

"And I shall never see you!"

"You will hear from me, and I hope I shall have good news to write."

Willis Ford left the house, and going to the Grand Central Depot bought a ticket for Chicago.

Now came a quiet and pleasant period after the trouble and excitement. Grant found his duties at the office increased, and it was pleasant to see that his employer rewarded him for his fidelity. His relations with others in the office were pleasant, now that Willis Ford was away, and every day he seemed to get new insight into the details of the business. Whether Jim Morrison and Tom Calder were in the city he did not know. At all events he never saw them in the neighborhood of Wall Street. Grant was not sorry to have them pass out of his life, for he did not consider that he was likely to draw any benefit from their presence and companionship.

He was still a member of Mr. Reynolds' household. Herbert appeared to be as much attached to him as if he were an older brother, and the broker looked with pleasure upon the new happiness that beamed from the face of his son.

As to Mrs. Estabrook, Grant had feared she would continue to show animosity towards him, but he had nothing to complain of. She certainly did not show any cordiality or necessary interest towards him, but, then, on the other hand, she didn't manifest any desire to injure him. This was all Grant desired. He felt that under no circumstances could he have made a friend of the housekeeper. He was content to have her leave him alone.

After the lapse of six months, Grant expressed a desire to go home to pass a day or two. His mother's birth-day was close at hand, and he had bought for her a present which he knew would be acceptable. Permission was readily accorded, and Grant passed four happy days at home. His parents were pleased that he was so highly regarded by his employer, and had come to think that Grant's choice had been a wise one.

When Grant returned, he went at once to the office. He found it a scene of excitement.

"What has happened?" he asked eagerly. "Herbert Reynolds has disappeared, and his father is almost beside himself with grief!" was the startling reply.

(To be continued.)

"Helping Himself" commenced in No. One Hundred and Four. Book numbers of the ARGOSY can be had at any time. Ask your newsdealer for them, or order them of the publisher.



LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

Mix enemy, who time and oft  
Had snatched me from the like swords,  
And trampled on my answer soft  
Till I too smote with angry words,  
Is dead, and I am fairly quit.  
God give him rest. Once all away,  
Seeing he loved me not a whit,  
No heart have I to bid him stay.

And yet methinks the God who framed  
Both him and me, should hardly be such  
That we were scarcely to be blanch'd  
For loving not each other much.  
The little good there was in me,  
It was not his, nor in his will;  
His good I haply might not see,  
Because he lacked one dazzling ray.

God give him rest! The single crime,  
Mistake of me, should hardly be such  
His fame with one who many a time  
Can smoothly say, "I like me not."  
Perhaps we never fairly met  
That part in each God meant should live,  
And so incurred no lasting debt  
And have but little to forgive.

GOOD FOR EVIL.

A RUSSIAN STORY.  
BY HUBBERT A. MILLARD.

AST one who has been able to take in the feelings and situation of little Ivan Woronoff as he trudged along on of the high roads in the south of Russia, would have pitied him heartily.

Not more than twelve years of age, ill-clad, and with not even a coin of even the humblest description wherewith to purchase a mouthful of food, he found himself a poor little waif upon the common highway, in a country where beggars are so numerous that every dog looks upon them as beings inferior to themselves and who have no rights that dogs are bound to respect.

The literal truth of this last proposition had been forced upon poor Ivan that very day, by many a growl and surly look from door and gateway as he passed along.

Yet Ivan Woronoff was no beggar. He was simply in quest of some work which should afford him means of subsistence. Luckily it was summer, so that he had not to battle against the adverse elements of nature. He had only to contend against hunger and weariness, and that disappointment which follows the rejection of offered service. The poor turned him away because they had too little; the rich because they had too much. The first were their own servants; the others had more servants than they needed.

An observer would have noted in him a certain delicacy of face and manner not to be found among the children of the coarse Russian peasants. His was a clear cut profile, and the oval features presented on a fair front view were remarkably handsome.

The outward habiliments can hardly disguise a sensitive, intelligent spirit, and this the boy evidently had. If really the offspring of parents emancipated from serfdom only a few years before by the imperial ukaz of Alexander II, he was certainly a most favorable specimen of the class.

Now he was tired and dispirited, for he had encountered frowns and cold words in the course of the day, and met with nothing of sympathy.

But the day was delightful, and the scenery, as beheld from the high road, all that the imagination could desire. Hence the vigor of youthful hope still sustained him, and he felt that in so wide and fair a world there must yet be something which he could do.

At length upon the brow of a high and tree-clad hill, he seated himself to rest and think.

The position was an extremely romantic one. He could see hills, vales and forests stretching away for miles to the north and west, while upon the south and east gleamed the seemingly endless waters of the Black Sea.

From his high outlook he could discern the spires of the city of Odessa, from which he had that day travelled, and where on the previous day he had caught a glimpse of the Emperor Alexander III, who was visiting the place.

He thought of the imperial guards in their brilliant uniform, and recalled the stern, troubled face of the Czar, as he appeared in the midst of the gorgeous throng of nobles, generals and admirals.

"I hate him," he said to himself; "I hate all these great people; but I suppose they can't help being great any more than I can help being little. They were born so. I only wish they would let other people have a chance to live too."

"I wonder if the Emperor knows he ever did me any harm? I wonder if he does these cruel things, or if they are just done by people that want to keep in his favor, and he don't know anything about the particulars—only that something has been done, and somebody has been punished."

"Well, he wouldn't dare to sit here alone by the roadside, as I do—so I'm even with him, great as he is! All Russia is his farm; but what is the good of having a farm if we are afraid to walk about on it?"

"I wonder whose house that is over yonder? Some one of the nobility, I suppose. I don't like them, but I'll try when I get there, and see if they will give me anything to do to earn my supper."

The distant mansion had a pleasant appearance, surrounded as it was by wide fields, parks and forests; and Ivan was right in be-

lieving it the dwelling of some nobleman. He could even see a number of deer feeding upon a green glade which no doubt made a portion of the estate, and others lying beneath the trees on the outskirts of a deep wood.

"It must be a pleasant place to live," thought Ivan; "and if they will only let me show them that I am willing to work, perhaps they will keep me till I can find something better to do. I was not born a peasant, but I am worse than one now, though I will not be so always if I can help it. Hark, who are those coming?"

The voices of a couple of horsemen had attracted his attention. From his position he could catch but a momentary glimpse of them as they approached, and when they came to a halt close to him, he was completely hidden from them as well as they from him.

At first they made some observations upon the vast estate so attractively spread before them, and then in lower tones continued their conversation, changing the subject to political and other matters which Ivan could not comprehend.

He gathered, however, that they were plotting some deep injury to people whom they disliked. They spoke of some gathering of the nobility shortly to take place, and referred almost in whispers to the part they themselves were to act on that occasion.

Little as Ivan was able to connect the

cleansing and putting things in shape, and the boy rejoiced in the prospect of a good supper which should be earned by his own hand.

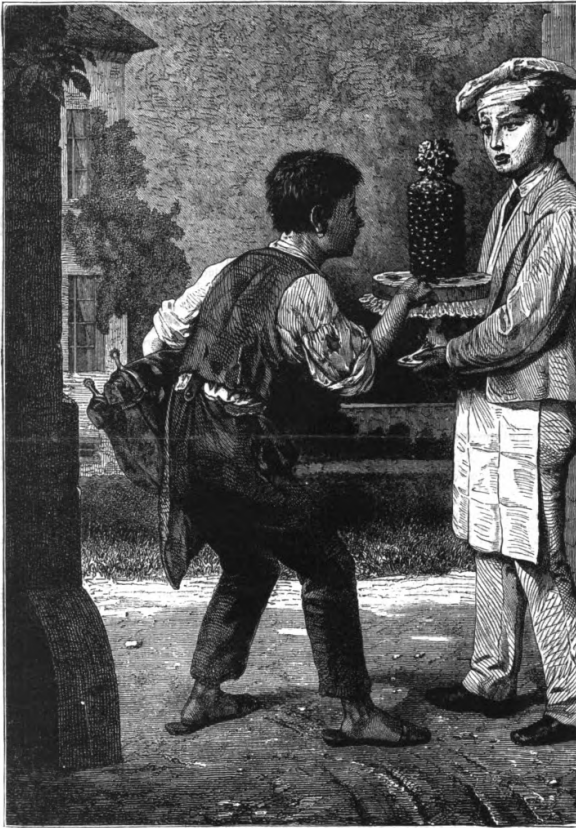
With some of the servants—boys of his own age—he was soon on excellent terms; and from these he learned that their master, the great nobleman, was the next day to give his daughter in marriage to a young and wealthy count, whom, with much pride, as if the circumstance reflected credit upon themselves, they represented to be a great favorite of the Emperor.

That evening Ivan was directed to seek his quarters in a bed of straw, such as was common to all the inferior servants; and here in the great bare room, he learned from their conversation many particulars of the morrow's display.

The Emperor himself would be present—his visit to Odessa rendering it easy for him to do so; and though the servants may have thought that he would be risking a great deal, they did not say as much in words.

Ivan lay long awake, reflecting upon the strangeness of his position, and upon matters connected with it. Among other things, the image of his father seemed to stand before his eyes.

"What a little boy I was when they took him away," he said; "but I remember how he looked, and the tones of his kind voice



THERE WAS A GREAT CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO AS THEY STOOD THERE.

broken sentences, he still understood enough of the colloquy to startle his young heart.

"They are Nihilists," he said to himself, "and if they cannot kill the Emperor, they mean to kill some of his friends. I'm sure I do not like the Czar—I hate him fully as much as they do; but I hate crime a great deal worse. I wouldn't kill a person for all the world! My father was called a Nihilist, but he was only for good government, and they accused him without cause, as I heard mother say just before she died. I am sure he would never have joined with men like these."

As such thoughts passed through Ivan's mind, the men rode away, and then stepping out from his concealment, he proceeded toward the mansion in view.

Three or four large dogs barked at him as he approached, but they were chained and harmless. Soon he found himself in the midst of a number of servants, who, as they ran hither and thither eyed the new-comer with some curiosity.

There ensued an unusual stir about the premises as if for some great occasion. The wings and open courts of the noble abode were thronged with attendants of all descriptions who hurried to and fro with looks of importance, as if borrowing consequence from the event in prospect, whatever it might be.

The head steward to whom Ivan applied, at once set him about some menial task at

come to me just as if he were. I wonder if he is living now? I wonder if it is always winter in that miserable Siberia that is mother was always talking of?"

Then he thought of the Emperor with a bitter hate, as the author of all the misfortunes of his family.

"I don't blame the Nihilists—no I don't! I'll be a Nihilist myself!" he said, with momentary passion.

The thought of the Nihilists recalled the conversation to which he had listened by the roadside. Was not this the very occasion they had referred to? Had they not spoken of the gathering of many of the principal nobility, and of the Emperor's own presence? And had he not gathered from them that some deadly means of evil would be employed by those who held the government in detestation?

"But they, too, were of the gentry," he thought, "and I guess nobody suspects them. Perhaps they will be here among the others."

He reflected that they had spoken of some choice gift, as it there would be danger in it, not only to the Czar, but to many others. The expressions had confused him at first, but now he appeared to see their meaning, though after all he might mistake it.

Next day he saw among the guests who arrived, the very men of whom he had been thinking. They were evidently of some considerable rank, though not as high as many of the others.

He learned from his fellow servants that these men had brought with them some rare presents, among others some remarkable conserves in jars of curious workmanship in the top of which were placed diamonds besprikled with small diamonds.

The two men had made mention of jars and flowers, and of some fearful thing as connected with them?

What could it be? And what should he do?

The Emperor arrived in royal state, the tall horsemen of his guard flaming in their brilliant coats and helmets, and the imperial carriage escorted by nobles whose decorations were almost too bright to look upon.

Of course, Ivan, engaged in menial tasks, could see nothing of the preparations within the immense mansion, but he knew that they must be grand in the extreme. He was in an open court, across which many things for the entertainment were carried by servants of higher position than himself.

He watched narrowly the waiter after waiter appeared with some article of use or ornament.

At length, while putting a final polish upon a pair of boots and spurs, he started suddenly to his feet.

He looked upon a young man, dressed in white, and a few years older than himself, was about passing him bearing in his hands the very thing for which he had been watching—a curious jar with flowers in a round cluster upon its top.

"Oh, wait a moment," cried Ivan, "let me see it!"

"Away with you, you miserable boot-black!" exclaimed the tall boy, with a severe look; "what do you mean by stopping me in this way?"

"Don't carry it in," pleaded Ivan; "its poisoned or some other dreadful thing is the matter with it. They mean to kill the Emperor and Count Platoff and all the others!"

"You're a Nihilist yourself," said the boy, "else how could you know all this? Who told you?"

"Never mind who told me," replied Ivan, more than ever excited. "I want to see Count Platoff; I want to see the Emperor. Tell them I have something to say."

There was a great contrast between the two as they stood there, the one in his perfectly fitted dress of spotless white, the other bareheaded and little more than half-clad, with a field-marshal's boots under his arm, and his body half bent in the earnestness of his appeal.

The waiter hesitated a moment, then turned away to seek advice from some one in higher position. Ivan's evident sincerity had impressed and startled him.

Our young hero's heart beat hard when a summons came which called him into the presence of the Emperor. But he was a boy of courage, and did not lose his self-possession for a moment.

Alexander listened to his recital of the scene by the roadside with alarmed interest, as well as with some surprise at the correct language and superior intelligence of the little lad before him.

"Who are you, my boy?" he asked.

"My father is the Count Woronoff," replied Ivan, "whom your majesty's father sent to Siberia six years ago; but please your majesty I know he was not guilty, for my mother often told me so."

The Emperor turned away and gave orders for the arrest of the two conspirators; as well as for an examination of the suspected conserves.

These were found to contain a poison of the most deadly character, so that if the plot was a clumsy one, its malignity and recklessness were in perfect keeping with the character of the Nihilists.

The two criminals seeing that hope was at an end, made a full confession of their intentions.

Though outwardly friendly to Count Platoff, their host, they were to hear his enemies, and it would not have grieved them to have destroyed both him and a full score of his guests while compassing the death of the Emperor. In the mean while they had provided for their own flight and escape.

"And so, my lad," said Alexander, kindly "though you knew my father had sent you to Siberia, you could yet feel a desire to save my life. I see you are a brave, noble boy, and you are henceforth under my protection."

"But, my father," said Ivan, "if he must always live in Siberia, I would choose to go there too."

"I hope you will be under no necessity of taking such a journey," said the Emperor. "From this moment your father is pardoned and all his estates are restored."

The "Czar of all the Russians" could not help feeling that the little waif of the roadside had returned good for evil, and he hastened to show his appreciation of the act.

The order for the release of Count Woronoff was sent to Siberia that very night as fast as the electric wire could carry it; and the little wanderer felt that he should be no more homeless or friendless.

A NEW WAY OF MOUNTING.

The women of Peru ride on the hind-quarters of their horses, without a saddle, cross-legged, with a lead on the horse in front. They mount the animal by taking hold of his tail, making a loop by doubling it up and clasping with one hand the upper and lower parts of the tail, and then, putting one foot in the loop and the other on the joint of the horse's leg, they ascend as if going up-stairs. They usually stand erect on the seat before sitting down. The horses never kick nor stir.



THE FORTUNATE ISLES.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

You sail and you seek for the Fortunate Isles, The old Greek Isles of the yellow-birds' song?

Why, Duty, and Love, and a large content And what are the names of the Fortunate Isles?

THE GUARDIANS' TRUST.

BY BARBARA A. DENISON.

Author of "Mary's Triumph," "Fremoch's Ward," "The Actor's Ring," etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

BECK'S EXPERIENCE.

"Do you know who I am?" asked Beck, in a faltering voice. "Yes, I have just guessed it," he replied, and his own voice yielded to a little meek.

"I have been thinking it out," said Beck. "As I told you, I shall be thirteen in a year, and during that time I must be in hiding."

"And you were going to such a place?" said the janitor gloomily. "It was his sister they had thus shamefully wronged and abducted."

"I should just like to charge them with it," said Ralph, whose face had grown white.

"But still she looks like her," said Ralph, admiringly. "I saw it that night."

they must have known you were quite sane." "It seems so," said Beck. "I have thought it over a great many times."

"I'd like to fog them," muttered Ralph. "And they were so kind before they took me there," Beck went on. "They gave me a description of the place; of course I took their word for it, I had no one to go to—"

"No, it is not all over, though perhaps I shall forget in time. It has made me years older, and I am afraid I do not feel much like forgiving them."

"I do not ever forgive them!" said Ralph, stoutly. "Hush, my son," said the janitor. "As soon as I found where I was," said Beck.

"There is only one answer to that," he said. "I was poor, unfortunate and proud. I would not let him see that all my boasting had come to naught, and I had come back to me almost a beggar."

"You haven't heard all," said Beck, smiling. "I have not been wandering in the woods all day. Oh, how tired and hungry I was!

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"I think I never was happier in my life than I was the evening of that night," he murmured.

helpful life of the woods for the poor boy, and firmly believes that such a life would do more for him than medicines or doctors. He gave me the boy's berth, he called it, for a sleeping place, and made up a bed for him somewhere outside."

"I asked him if I should speak of his home in the forest. 'Certainly,' he said, 'I am not afraid of being intruded on. You might never be able to find my little habitation again, and you are the first one who ever did find it.'"

"But do you suppose that dear little boy would always have to live in the woods?" asked Dell, who had been thinking, "with only that old man, and no children to play with?"

"For answer she gave him a grateful look that was full of love. "You are so kind to have the same principle," she said, a moment after.

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