

## PRAYER IN HELL.

BY G. L. WILSON.

The earth and heaven are peace,  
And mind and justice are law and sway;  
Within the dwelling place of peace,  
Where joy to joy, our hopes increase.  
The wicked pray, oh, such a prayer!  
Ye rocks and hills, why stand ye there?  
O earth, why stand ye here?  
Dread soul, thou curse, why look here?  
Hah! twas my shadow frightened me;  
Hold!—is the light of him doth shine?  
To me?—is my shadow? curse divine?  
Am I but a wretched, wretched soul?  
But oh! this hate! myself I hate!  
Ye hills, shut out the light;  
Ye clouds, shut out the light;  
What burns in me? My! What hell  
The sunless purity doth swell.  
The wretched soul, the wretched soul!  
What focus light beyond the gate?  
I cast out, the light comes through the gate;  
I wish not heaven now, but hell,  
To which I have no key, no key,  
Where man or devil ever find  
A greater hell than cursed mind!  
I have no hills, shut out the light;  
Ye clouds, shut out the light;  
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MR. AND MRS. BONDURANT.

BY BONNE HUER.

"I think you will find a document under your plate that may interest you," said Mr. Bondurant, addressing her husband, as he took his seat at the breakfast table.

The words were uttered with a look intended to express severe censure, with some pity and contempt, and rather more of the latter.

The husband slowly turned over his plate and read a grocer's bill—\$59.34. On the margin were the words, "Check expected immediately."

"I would rather not send this man a check just now," said Mr. Bondurant. "It is true I have a little more than the amount in the bank, but I shall need all I have and more also to-morrow to pay the costs of the suit I am conducting."

"This is about the amount I expected to receive," said his wife, "and I must tell you that your paltry excuses will not answer for the purpose. That bill must be paid at once."

"It is scarcely worth while, Julia, to speak so emphatically in regard to this matter," said the husband. "I am doing a little business for these grocers and although they do not owe me anything to-day, I suppose, get them to pay to-morrow, and then we will let us have what goods we need."

"They will do nothing of that sort," said Mrs. Bondurant. "And if the bill is not paid before 3 o'clock to-day, they will send it to my son, Alfred, who will pay it and take an assignment of the claim."

"Then let him do so," said Mr. Bondurant, quietly breaking a piece of hard cracker into his coffee and at the same time deliberately watching the softening process. "This is what they call hard-task, I believe. It is better for all concerned, and especially for me, to have more time to spend soaking it, unless when the rough weather comes on, and then I suppose they dispense with the ceremony of eating until the storm has expended its fury."

"Your insinuations are intended to exasperate me," said Mrs. Bondurant, "but I warn you, sir, that you are treading on treacherous ground."

"If the ground, madam, on which I am treading is composed of the soil of which you are made, it is not, I am commonly delicate," was the reply.

"Are you willing, sir, to have my brother pay that grocer's bill?"

"I could have easily arranged it in such a way that it would not have gone into his hands, but as I infer from what you say that the matter has been talked over between him and you and the grocer, and that he has agreed to take an assignment of the bill if I do not pay it before 3 o'clock to-day, I shall allow the matter to be disposed of in that way, and give myself no further trouble."

"Then it seems you are willing to have my brother provide for your family? That is just what he told me it would come to when we were married, and in fact immediately after he first learned that you were visiting me. My father and mother also gave me the same warning. They told me more than fifty times that you would never be worth a dollar in the world, and they would have to support us."

"And you are sorry you did not take their advice?"

"Sometimes I am, if I must tell you the truth. You know I can have married Rocky Billings and I had other good offers. As far as I know, I am almost dying for me. His social standing was not, it is true, quite equal to yours, and he was not so good-looking, but he had more business capacity than a hundred young lawyers like you. With him for a husband I would never have suffered the mortification of seeing a grocer's bill paid by my brother."

"Mr. Billings is still unmarried, I believe," said the husband dryly.

"We have been separated, and those words intended to comfort you. You know my husband, and I have no wish to exchange you for Mr. Billings or any one else. If I have made a bad bargain it is right that I should suffer the consequences of it, and I intend to do so as patiently as I can."

"Mr. Bondurant regarded his wife for a few moments in bewildered amazement. He was carefully holding the \$59.34 bill, which had been torn from the pocket of his coat, and without knowing who had handed it back to him. He now dropped the bill on the table, and clasping his hands, as he was in the habit of doing sometimes when trying to get a clear view of some question that bothered him, he looked at his wife for a few moments in a solemn and earnest way, and then said:

"If our dear child had lived I suppose you would not have left me."

"No, I presume not; she, no doubt, would have kept us together. I would not have taken her from you, and I know you would not have gone to live with your son's wife. I have no thought of Alfred's really loving you, but shall be true to my marriage vow, and shall ready to return to you as soon as you are able to provide for me. But for the present we must part. My brother tells me that the claim you are prosecuting will end in nothing, and that you are not worth a dollar to-day, and if that is so, it would seem that you are leaving me with the expectation of getting no more."

"That may be so, Mr. Bondurant," said his wife, steering herself to a cold and firm look, "on the possible contingency of your being able, at some future time, to provide for me in a comfortable way, which, I am sorry to say, does not now appear very probable."

"Then good-by forever!" said the husband, rising and withdrawing from the room, without taking any further notice of his wife; nor did he even look back.

The marriage, as a legal relation, remained undisturbed. The husband and wife, who met occasionally on the street, or who were bowed upon each other's bow of civil recognition, took place. I understand he is a somewhat able lawyer, but is very poor and is no doubt likely to remain so in a profession that is crowded until there is no longer standing room left. You had better have a talk with your brother and hear his opinion in regard to this young lawyer before you allow him to take many times more."

A scornful and defiant look was the

only answer this suggestion raised, and the next moment the young lady had left the room.

"You see how that girl takes and sets," said Mr. Henderson to his wife, who had been a silent listener.

"Yes, my dear," said her mother, "and I am now satisfied that her feelings are more deeply interested in the young lawyer than any of us had ever known. But let Alfred tell her his love, and he may be able to turn her thoughts away from young Bondurant and get her to encourage the attentions of Mr. Billings. He is rather a low-bred young man, it is true, but he is making money rapidly, and his unctuous manner need not alarm us—a few weeks spent in society will make them all right."

"Perhaps so," said Mr. Henderson, with a look that betrayed more skepticism than confidence.

"I had no thought of seriously encouraging the attentions of Mr. Bondurant," said Julia, the moment she began to feel the pressure of her brother's determination to prevent the acquaintance from proceeding any further. "But now, if you please, Master Alfred, I shall do exactly as I think best in regard to this matter."

"Not much, I hope, darling husband!" And as he lifted her into the carriage he had hailed and took a seat by her side, with his arm around her, she added, "How glad I am that you were there to assist me."

"What was that, was that a slippery path?" he said softly.

"Which I hope I may never pass over again!" murmured the wife, earnestly.

"I gained that suit," said the husband, as the carriage was taking them to his home, which could now be herred.

"Are you hurt, my dear?" were the first words she heard, and her quick, spontaneous answer was:

"Not much, I hope, darling husband!" And as he lifted her into the carriage he had hailed and took a seat by her side, with his arm around her, she added, "How glad I am that you were there to assist me."

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had no other means of support, and a salary much larger than she had expected to receive, was a mystery about which she had her own private suspicion.

It was a cold morning in mid-winter, and the sidewalks were covered with ice. Mrs. Bondurant, on her way to work, had just turned the corner of one whom she had never seen before, and he may be able to turn her thoughts away from young Bondurant and get her to encourage the attentions of Mr. Billings. He is rather a low-bred young man, it is true, but he is making money rapidly, and his unctuous manner need not alarm us—a few weeks spent in society will make them all right."

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