

#### PRAYING FOR SHOES.

BY PAUL H. HAYNE.

On a dark November morning  
A lady walked slowly down  
The thronged, tumultuous thoroughfare  
Of an ancient seaport town.  
Of a winning and graceful beauty,  
The peace on her pure young face  
Was soft as the gleam of an angel's dream  
In the calms of a heavenly place.

Her eyes were fountains of pity,  
And the sensitive mouth expressed  
A longing to set the kind thoughts free  
In music that filled her breast.  
She met, by a bright shop window,  
An urchin, timid and thin,  
Who, with limbs that shook and a yearning  
look,  
Was mistily glancing in.

At the rows and various clusters  
Of slippers and shoes outspread,  
Some, shimmering keen, but of somber sheen,  
Some purple and green and red.

His pale lips moved and murmured;  
But of what she could not hear,  
And oft on his folded hands would fall  
The round of a bitter tear.

"What troubles you, child?" she asked him,  
In a voice like the May-wind sweet.  
He turned, and while pointing dolorfully  
To his naked and bleeding feet,

I was praying for shoes," he answered:  
("Just look at the splendid show!")  
I was praying to God for a single pair,  
The sharp stones hurt me so."

She led him, in museful silence,  
At once through the open door,  
And his hope grew bright, like a fairy light  
That flared and danced before.

And there he was washed and tended,  
And his small brown feet were shod;  
And he pondered there on his childish prayer  
And the marvelous answer of God.

Above them his keen gaze wandered,  
How strangely from shop and shelf,  
Till it almost seemed that he fondly dreamed  
Of looking on God himself.

The lady bent over and whispered:  
"Are you happier now, my lad?"  
He started, and all his soul flashed forth  
In a gratitudo swift and glad.

"Happy? \* \* \* Oh! yes! I am happy!"

Then \* \* \* (wonder with reverence rife,  
His eyes aglow, and his voice sunk low)

"Please tell me! Are you God's wife?"

—Independent.

#### GREENBERRY GORDY'S LEAP IN THE DARK.

BY NEMO.

Conspicuous among the passengers on the southward bound train from Hawkinsville were Dr. Peter Columbus Hackemup and his blushing bride, Juliana Keziah, nee Skiggs. The lady had doffed her favorite color, green, and donned for the occasion the more bridelike attire, pale orange, which harmonized beautifully with the delicate salmon tints of her complexion. All eyes were upon them as they entered the car, Dr. Hackemup, of course, in advance, with the majestic strut of a turkey cock, Juliana ambling meekly in the rear. Smiling benignly and affectionately, the Doctor seated his fair spouse, and, having attended to her comforts, took his position beside her.

Suddenly an irreverent youth, overcome by his feelings, ejaculated, "The long and the short of it," to which a companion added, "The thick and the thin of it," a third joining in, "I had a little husband no bigger than my thumb."

Convinced that these invidious remarks alluded to himself and wife, Dr. Hackemup shot from his seat like a rocket, and, glaring in every direction but the right one, vociferated:

"Could I diagnose the perpetrators of these atrocious insults, I would slay them as did Samson the Philistines," and snorting violently, he flopped back into his seat.

"With that marital expression of countenance, Peter Columbus," sweetly remarked his admiring spouse, "you are irresistible. You remind me of Venus, the fulsome god of war, as he rose from the sea. I am a competent judge," she added, with modest pride, "for botany was always one of my favorite studies."

Somewhat appeased by this soothing assurance, Dr. Hackemup yielded himself to the seductive charm of the occasion, and the two turtle doves settled down to a little quiet cooing.

Suddenly, however, Mrs. Hackemup raised her head from the Doctor's shoulder with a jerk, while her countenance assumed an expression of anger and amazement. The Doctor, on his part, began to swell, until he bore such a striking resemblance to the ambitious frog who tried to be an ox that it was only by a miracle he escaped the same fate. The turtle doves were quarreling.

"Did you not tell me, madam," thundered the Doctor, "that your investments were secure? Did not Mr. Somers inform me that you were the possessor of a fat prize? Where are the investments, I ask; and where is the prize?"

"Oh!" groaned Juliana; "are these the cuddibilities of married life?" Bursting into tears she emitted a series of ear-splitting shrieks, and fell in hysterics into the unwilling arms of her angry spouse, from whence she slipped to the floor with a shriek, which restored her in the twirling of an eye.

Recriminations were exchanged vigorously for about ten minutes, to the great delight of the passengers. As they approached the next station, Dr. Hackemup pulled out the 1,000-mile ticket upon which they were traveling, and shaking it at his bride, exclaimed vigorously: "No more of this shall be wasted. I shall get off at this station and go back by return train. You can do as you please."

Juliana would have again resorted to hysterics, but the train slackened up at this moment, and fearful of losing her so lately acquired treasure, she seized his arm, and they marched off, amid the audible smiles of the spectators.

In the mean time, Belinda, the Doctor's pretty daughter, and Harry, his sixteen-year-old boy, who had been bit-

terly opposed to their father's second marriage, were sitting at home together, trying, with the unselfishness of truly loving hearts, to comfort each other. Just as they were about to seat themselves to their frugal supper of bread and cheese (being limited to this by their father's express command), the door opened, and without further warning in walked the malcontent bride and groom, sadly shorn of all their pristine grandeur.

A hollow reconciliation had been effected on the return trap; Dr. Hackemup shrewdly deciding that it would not mend matters to betray his chagrin, and poor Juliana being only too thankful to make peace on any terms. Conscious of presenting a sheepish appearance, the Doctor determined upon bold measures, and, therefore, without vouchsafing any explanation of their sudden return to his wondering children, or to Mr. and Mrs. Somers, at whose house he and Juliana were married, he settled down to the even tenor of usual every-day life, with as much apparent satisfaction as if his wedding trip had extended from Dan to Beer-sheba.

Still there was trouble in the Hackemup establishment.

As weeks and months rolled on Dr. Hackemup, always parsimonious, became positively miserly. To his intense dismay he discovered that his second venture in the matrimonial lottery had not only failed to secure him the wealth he hoped for, but had burdened him with a partner who was as fond of spending as he was of hoarding. Constant were the bickerings on the subject, all to no avail. The Doctor found that his confiding Juliana Keziah possessed an india-rubber nature. After crushing her to the earth one day with his ponderous logic, his work would be all to do over again the next, and so on in *perpetuum*.

In this terrible strait he would have lost all hope but for an unforeseen occurrence which revived his drooping spirits.

Greenberry Gordy, a dried-up old money lender, happened to cast his eye on Belinda's fresh young beauty, and coveted it for his own. Like a wise man in his generation, he spoke to the Doctor first, who in his turn conferred with his wife before broaching the subject to Belinda.

Mrs. Hackemup favored the proposed alliance. Apart from monetary considerations, it would be fine way of getting even with Belinda, who made no effort to conceal her dislike to her stepmother, and who secretly abetted Harry in all the various devices by which he daily sought to annoy his father's wife.

When Belinda was first apprised of the honor designed her, she burst into paroxysms of laughter, not dreaming her father could be in earnest. When convinced of this, however, the girl refused, with angry disdain, to see "Old Moneybags," as she called him, and hitherto had treated with the utmost scorn and contumely. Of course she had a lover—pretty girls do, all the world over, and Belinda was very pretty. Her beauty certainly was not inherited from her parents. It was nature's gift to her favored child, upon whom the partial dame likewise bestowed a loving heart, a bright intellect, and—a spicy temper.

Matters had thus gone on for several weeks. Greenberry's wizened old phiz could be seen every evening in Dr. Hackemup's parlor. Very seldom, however, was Belinda there. Neither the Doctor's coaxing and threats nor Juliana Keziah's sneers could induce her to treat politely her superannuated woe. At last Dr. Hackemup, fearing the old miser would change his mind, grew desperate, and, calling his daughter to his presence, bade her prepare for her wedding in a month, thundering forth, in reply to her indignant and emphatic refusal:

"Cease this contumacious behavior, and prepare to become Mrs. Greenberry Gordy. As to that audacious mendicant, John Heron, should he dare to darken my door, I will immediately and at once convert his corpus into a carcass, anatomize it upon the dissecting table, and wire the skeleton in terror."

Unawed by this terrific threat, the girl tossed her pretty banged head rebelliously, and shooting a defiant glance at her father and stepmother, rushed from the room, leaving the discomfited match-makers in a most uncomfortable state of suspense.

Although Belinda presented such a bold front to the enemy, still her youthful heart was boiling over with outraged pride and wounded affection. Hastily seeking her own room, she penned a note to the very Jack Heron against whom her father had uttered his dire threat, and dispatched it by Harry, who ardently espoused his sister's cause. As a result of the note, Mr. Heron presented himself at the side gate of Dr. Hackemup's yard at 8 o'clock that evening, where he was met by Harry, who conducted him at once to a little tumble-down summer house, in full view of the parlor windows. There he found Belinda awaiting him, and, while poor Greenberry sat in the parlor white with rage but outwardly smiling, while Dr. Hackemup and Juliana Keziah made night hideous with shouts of Belinda and Belindia, these refractory lovers, with Harry on guard, remained serene, discussing the past, present, and future.

Furious was the scolding bestowed upon Belinda next morning by her irate parent for her impudent absence. To his surprise she received his reproaches meekly. To his delight and astonishment, when evening brought Greenberry as usual, Belinda greeted her suitor quite graciously, and when he, emboldened, ventured to allude to their marriage, the young lady merely

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