

THE WHEAT AND THE CHAFF.

There is an old tale of the golden age days, When the gods with men parleyed, and That a critic who dealt all blame and no praise Was once by Apollo reproved. The god handed back to the critical fool A handful of unwinnowed grains. Said he: "Leave the wheat, as seems ever your rule; You may have all the chaff for your pains."

Now, this guide to your choice is suggestive to day, Though told of a fabulous time, To any and all who its teachings obey In every country or clime.

For the wheat and the chaff are mixed for us still

As they were in those mythical grains; And if we choose now to see only ill, We shall have only that for our pains!

All pathways are checkered. Gray shadows and night.

Alternate with the sun's cheering rays. Our eyes grow accustomed to darkness or light As we fix upon either our gaze.

And we can be clear-eyed, or we can be blind, As each one his vision so trains;

If he chooses the dark need he wonder to find He can see nothing bright for his pains?

From the noisome swamps see the marsh fly lift

Its delicate, queenly blue head; From water and slime and dark earth it will sift

The nutrient best for its need. Poisons lurk in these things. It could draw evil thence.

As well as the good that it gains.

Shall it choose, then, those noxious elements whence

Hurt and death will proceed for its pains?

In our fellow-men are the elements mixed; Forever good mingles with sin.

On their errors, their faults, shall we keep our gaze fixed,

Or cloaking divine sparks within?

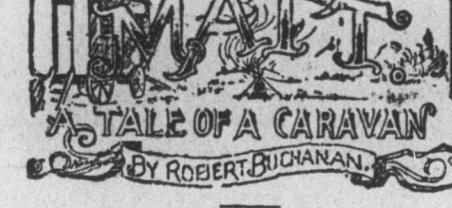
Ah! a lesson in judging our frail brothers, then.

We may learn from these fabulous grains.

If we seek but the chaff, can we fairly grieve when

We receive only chaff for our pains?

—Emily C. Adams, in N. Y. Sun.



CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

The old man, knowing his son's temper, did as he was told, and William continued to potter aimlessly about the room. He was certainly trembling very much, and was almost overcome with a nervousness for which he himself could not account. For he was no coward. To get possession of a prize on the high seas he would have faced a storm which might well make brave men tremble, not to mention that he knew that he had on more than one occasion humanely hastened the end of the shipwrecked sailors whom he had found and pillaged on the shore. After these acts he had been able to sleep the sleep of virtue without being haunted by dead men's eyes. But now the case was different. He had not to deal with a victim without friends, a man whose body, described as that of a "shipwrecked mariner," could be buried and forgotten without more ado. In all probability there would this time be a hue and cry, and William Jones trembled lest his share in the ghastly business might ultimately be discovered.

True, he was not actually the culprit, and so even at the worst he might escape the gallows; but to a man of his sensitive and affectionate nature the thought of transportation



"WHERE IS MATT?" HE ASKED.

was not pleasant. It was this that made him nervous—that this made him start and tremble at every sound.

Presently a thought struck him.

"Where's Matt?" he asked.

"Don't know, William dear; she ain't been here for hours and hours. Maybe she's on the shore."

"Maybe she is—I'll go and have a look," replied William.

It must not be supposed for a moment that William Jones had become affected with a sudden and tender interest in Matt—he merely wanted to get quit of the cabin that was all, and he saw in this a reasonable excuse for walking out alone. He accordingly made his escape, and went wandering off along the shore.

It was ten o'clock when he returned; he was still pale, and drenched to the skin. The old man was dozing beside the fire, and alone.

"Where's Matt?" asked William again.

"Ain't you seen her, William dear? Well, she ain't here."

William Jones did look a little uneasy this time, and it is but due to him to confess that his uneasiness was caused by Matt's prolonged absence. Erratic as she was in her movements she had not been accustomed to staying out so late, especially on a night when the rain was pouring, and not a glimmer of star or moon was to be seen.

"Wonder what she's a doin' of?" said William; "suppose I'd best wait up for her. Here, old man, you go to bed, d'ye hear—you ain't wanted anyhow."

The old man accordingly went to bed, and William sat up to await Matt's return. The old man sat beside the hearth, looked into the smoldering fire and listened to the rain as it poured down steadily upon the roof. Occasionally

he got up and went to the door; he could see nothing, but he heard the patter of falling rain, and the low, dreary moan of the troubled sea.

"Hour after hour passed, and Matt did not come. William Jones began to doze by the fire—then he sank into a heavy sleep.

He awoke with a start, and found that it was broad daylight. The fire was out, the rain had ceased to fall, and the morning's sun was creeping in at the windows. He looked around and saw that he was still alone. He went into Matt's room—it was empty. She had not returned.

He was now filled with a vague uneasiness. He made up a bit of fire and was about to issue forth again in search of the truant, when all further trouble was saved him—the door opened and Matt herself appeared.

She seemed almost as much disturbed as William Jones himself. Her face was very pale, her hair wild, her dress in great disorder. She started on seeing him, then, assuming a devil-may-care look, she lounged in:

"You're up early, William Jones," she said.

"Yes, I am up early," he replied, gruffly; "cause why?—cause I ain't been to bed. And where have you been?—jest tell me that."

"Why—I've been out, of course," returned the girl, defiantly.

"That won't do, Matt," returned William Jones. "Come, you'll jest tell me where you've been. You ain't been out all night for nothing."

The girl gave him a look, half of defiance, half of curiosity; then she threw herself down, rather than sat, upon a chair.

"I am tired, I am," she said, "and hungry and cold!"

"Will you tell me where you've been, Matt?" cried William Jones, trembling with suspicious alarm.

"Course I will, if you keep quiet," said the girl in answer. "There ain't much to tell neither. I were away along to Pancross when the heavy rain came on, then I lay down behind a haystack and fell asleep, and when I woke up it was daylight and I come home."

William Jones looked at her steadfastly and long; then, as if satisfied, he turned away. About an hour later he left the hut and walked along the shore straining his eyes seaward. But instead of looking steadfastly at one spot, as his custom was, he paused now and again to gaze uneasily about him. At every sound he started and turned pale. In truth, he was becoming a veritable coward—afraid almost of the sound of his own footsteps on the sands.

CHAPTER XIV. THE CARAVAN DISAPPEARS.

Several days passed away, during which William Jones showed a strange and significant affection for his own fireside. He went out a little in the sunlight; but directly night came he locked and barricaded the door as if against thieves and declined, on any inducement, to cross the threshold. Even had a three-decker gone ashore in the neighborhood he would have thought twice before issuing forth into the dreaded darkness.

For William Jones was genuinely afraid; his hereditary calm of mind was shaken, not so much with horror at a murderous deed, as with consternation that his life-long secret had been discovered by one man, and might, sooner or later, be discovered by others. He did not put implicit faith even in Monk; it was his nature to trust nobody where money was concerned.

As to returning back to the cave until he had quite recovered his equanimity, that was out of the question. Even by daylight he avoided the spot with a holy horror. Only in his dreams, which were dark and troubled, did he visit it—to see the face of the murdered man in the darkness, and the hand of the murdered man pointing at him with cold, decaying finger.

The day after the murder he had been greatly unsettled by a visit from Tim Linney, who demanded news of his master and said that he had not returned to the caravan all night. Tim seemed greatly troubled, but gave vent to no very violent ebullitions of grief. When he was done Matt sat by the fireside and looked long and keenly at William Jones.

"What are you staring at?" cried he, fidgeting uneasily under her gaze.

"Nowt," said Matt; "I were only wondering"—

"Then don't go wondering," exclaimed the good man, rather inconsistently. "You mind your own business and don't be a fool!" And he turned testily and gazed at the fire. But Matt, whose eyes were full of a curious light, was not to be abashed.

"I don't want it—I shan't wear it," she cried.

"Nonsense, Matt!" said Monk. "Why, it's a ring fit for a lady. Come, let me put it on your finger."

As he spoke he drew from his waistcoat pocket a small gold ring, set with turquoise stones. But Matt still trembled, and shrank away.

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"Ain't you well, William Jones?" she asked.

"I'm well enough—I am."

"It's queer, ain't it, that the painter chap never comes home?"

"How should I know?" growled William.

"Maybe he's gone back where he come from."

"Or maybe he's drowned? Or maybe something else has happened to him?" suggested Matt.

"Never you mind him, my gal. He's all right, never fear. And if he ain't no affair o' yours, or mine neither. You go along out and play."

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rushlight fixed to the table. But in a moment William blew out the match and snatched the box from her.

"What are you doin' of?" he cried. "Wasting the matches, as if they cost nowt. You'll come to the workus' afore you're done."

The days passed and there was no news of the absent man. Every day Matt went up to the caravan to make inquiries. At last one afternoon she returned, looking greatly troubled; her eyes were red, too, as if she had been crying.

"What's the matter now?" demanded William, who had left his usual seat and was standing at the door.

"Nowt," said Matt, wiping her eyelids with the back of her hand.

"Don't you tell no lies. You're heed summatur? Stop! What's that there under your arm?"

He awoke with a start, and found that it was broad daylight. The fire was out, the rain had ceased to fall, and the morning's sun was creeping in at the windows. He looked around and saw that he was still alone. He went into Matt's room—it was empty. She had not returned.

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At all once he had perceived that she carried a large roll of something wrapped in brown paper. He took it from her and opened it nervously. It was the crayon portrait of herself executed by the defunct artist.

"Who gave you this here?" cried William, trembling more than ever.

"Tim."

"Who's he?"

"Him as come looking arter his master. The painter chap ain't round; and now Tim's goin' away in the cart to

"WHO GAVE YOU THIS HERE!" CRIED WILLIAM JONES.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

HOLIDAYS IN COLONIAL TIMES.

Public Officials Took Life Easy When Now York Was a British Colony.

Public functionaries performing official duties in halcyon days of old New York, when it was a British colony, had a pretty easy time of it. Their pay was liberal and was sure. His majesty, the king of Great Britain, was careful of his servants, and there were plenty of holidays. A contrast between the number of these and the number legally observed at present shows how much more time for pleasure and recreation the old-time officials were permitted to enjoy. The legal holidays in the New York departments are New Year's day, Washington's birthday, Decoration day, Independence day, Labor day, election day, Thanksgiving day and Christmas day—in all, exclusive of the Saturday half holiday. These are the eight days observed in the city and in the federal departments of New York. Here is a list of the holidays observed at the New York custom house in the last year of English rule:

New Year's day, the queen's birthday, anniversary of King Charles' execution, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lady day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Easter Tuesday, St. George's day, King Charles' restoration, king's birthday, Whit Monday, Whit Tuesday, prince of Wales' birthday, powder plot anniversary, Christmas, Christmas holidays (three days), Fast day, Thanksgiving day, election day, college commencement day.

These were the stated holidays. Special ones were added from time to time as occasion seemed to justify, as "holiday in token of the safe arrival of a packet," "holiday in commemoration of the king's safe return from a sea voyage," "holiday in commemoration of the opening of a new street," "holiday in commemoration of the repulse of the Indians," and other similar occasions of public office closing. The English officials in New York believed above all things else in having a good time. They did not regard a public office as a public trust. They disliked pernicious activity, and, above all, desired plenty of time for recuperation from their arduous duties. Some of the pretenses for abandoning work seem, at the present time, very quaint. A clerk in charge of one of the government departments closed it abruptly one morning, leaving this sign to account for his absence:

"HE'LL TURN NO MORE HEADS," muttered Monk under his breath. He added aloud and with decision: "There must be an end to this. She must be married to me at once."

"Do you mean it, master? When you spoke on it fast I thought you was joking."

"Then you were a fool for your pains. She's old enough and bold enough and vixenish enough; but I'll tame her. I tell you there must be no delay. My mind's made up, and I'll wait no longer."

Sinking their voices they continued to talk together for some time. Now Matt was crouching close to the threshold, and had heard every word of the above conversation, and much that followed it. When Monk walked away and disappeared, leaving William Jones ruminant at the broken gate, she suddenly reappeared.

"He'll turn no more heads," muttered Monk under his breath. "Diligence did not characterize the public servants. Their minds inclined to holidays, and the local inhabitants who had no voice in affairs had no alternative but to acquiesce, the king's will prevailing, and a majority of the employees of the government officers being the younger sons of aristocratic Englishmen, who had influence enough at court to have them billeted upon the people of the colonies. It need hardly be added that no contemporaneous reformer had the hardihood to propose that these English functionaries should work "on time." The American government put an end to wholesale holidays as it did to alien officials in New York.—N. Y. Sun.

GONE TO SEE A WHALE IN THE RIVER.

Several whales had been seen in the harbor before that. Diligence did not characterize the public servants. Their minds inclined to holidays, and the local inhabitants who had no voice in affairs had no alternative but to acquiesce, the king's will prevailing, and a majority of the employees of the government officers being the younger sons of aristocratic Englishmen, who had influence enough at court to have them billeted upon the people of the colonies. It need hardly be added that no contemporaneous reformer had the hardihood to propose that these English functionaries should work "on time." The American government put an end to wholesale holidays as it did to alien officials in New York.—N. Y. Sun.