

THE EVENING NEWS.

Wednesday, April 26, 1871.

BELLE ALDEN.

A ROMANTIC EXCHANGE OF TRAVELING BAGS, AND WHAT CAME OUT.

A train bound for St. Louis had just left the station at Bellefontaine, when a gentleman entered the smoking-car and laid his hand upon the shoulder of his traveling companion—a tall, handsome man of thirty, who sat musingly blowing rings of smoke in the air.

"Mary," said the new comer, "if you want to sit all the way to the westward, you will have to go into the last car but one on the train. There's an emigrant German woman, with four little children, and during the afternoon, the youngest, a baby, has died. The mother and the other children are inconsolable."

"I can understand," interrupted the smoker, "the sadness of such a scene, but where is the sweethearts?"

"I'm coming to that. The whole party have been taken in charge by a young lady. She is a beauty! She's dried the mother's tears, and wiped the children's noses. She's a divinity! She only needs a few feathers on her shoulder-blades to make a full-fledged angel. If she had it, I'd give it to her. I never have her till I'd made Mrs. Agnes Townsend out of her."

"That's a speech I shall faithfully report to Mrs. Agnes Townsend," said the gentleman addressed as Mary, rising.

"I shall go back and feast my eyes on this beautiful Sister of Charity; and," he added taking his traveling-sack and hawl from the rack, "as we stop at the next station, which is due in ten minutes, I may as well take my traps through with me and join you on the platform."

Thus saying, Richard Marey threw his shawl over his shoulders, and sauntered leisurely through the long train-rushingly blantly and easily to his fate. For, as he entered the last car but one, he became a witness and an actor in a scene that influenced his future life.

The poor girl-striked German, of whom he was a coadjutor, Dr. Townsend, had spoken, with the dead infant in her arms, at silently weeping over the little dead face.

The three sturdy children grouped in childish sorrow about their little dead brother were, indeed, a touching spectacle. But standing beside them was the divinity of Dr. Townsend's admiration, and she who was most certainly to "shape the ends" of the unhappy Richard.

She was a tall, slender girl of eighteen, with magnificent eyes and hair. As he entered the car she was speaking, her lovely face flushed, and the small, rosy mouth, disclosing a beautiful set of teeth, turned bewitchingly toward the pale stranger at the door.

"A distinguished gentleman," said the voice, "with poor German friends, speaking no English, with four little children, was expecting today work in St. Louis to support them. If everything had gone well with him, it would have been hard for her; but with her little dead baby and her sorrowful heart, she is certainly a deserving object of charity; and I propose that such as feel willing, contribute their mite toward a permanent fund, which will be used for the burial of her poor babe." "And," she added, with a bewitching smile, "If any gentleman will lend me a hat, I will go round and take up a collection."

In an instant the gallant Richard pulled his sprawling cap from his blonde curl, and offered it to the Angel of Mercy, who accepted it with a smile, that time all his own, and commanded him to be ready to follow her. She took from her bosom a green silk purse brought from the purse of all in the world.

Richard watched the slender figure in gray gathering the money; and, looking at the plaid cap in the white, jeweled fingers, he besought her of his own donation, and stepping to the seat the beauty had just occupied, he laid his national emblem upon a family of his kind belonging to the angel in green, and took from his pocket a two-dollar bill, which he placed in the little hand which returned him his cap. Further damage the poor fellow received when a second smile and warmly worded thanks for his liberal contribution were dealt him from the beautiful mouth.

Dick was in the midst of an elaborate reply, when the cars stopped. He flung out his arms, and, with a shawl, and a matchet, and a shawl, with his eyes still on the face of his charmer, and then, even as the cars were in motion, he thought himself off the Doctor, and hurriedly left the car and joined his friends on the platform.

"Well," ejaculated that worthy, "I began to believe you'd concluded to go and bury the dead baby, and make the protecting beauty Mrs. Agnes Townsend. And she is a—"

"For goodness' sake!" returned his friend, "don't use slang in speaking of the noble creature." He looked after the train just disappearing in the distance. "I wish to heaven," he continued, "I'd remained aboard. How stupid I was to leave it, I might have learned her name and residence. And now—"

"Now, in all probability," broke in the Doctor, "you never met her before this instant, too. But you'll find her to heaven, if you be worth your salt enough to get there, by her wings; she'll have the biggest of any of them, seeing they've commenced to sprout on earth."

And thus rallying his thoroughly captivated friend, the two made their way to the house of an acquaintance, with whom they were to remain that night, and go on the next day to their destination, Los Angeles.

After the first salutation, our hero went to his room to remove some of the evidences of his long ride from New York. He had removed his coat, vest and collar; he had splashed and soaped and washed till his damp curls clung close to his shapely head, when he made a startling discovery.

Pinned and breathless, he burst into the next room upon his friend.

"Townsend," cried he, "what on earth do you suppose? I've got the wrong bag. I've exchanged baggage with the Angel of Mercy, look at that alpaca. See that thimble. Contemplate that glove."

"It's evident you've got the lady's matches. And what was there in yours?"

"Don't bring up that dreadful idea," said Dick. "Cigars and a half-break, a pot of coffee and a comic poet find a much broader sympathy than disengaged. If I am judged by that bag, I'm a lost man."

To be continued.

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