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HAD HE MADE A MISTAKE

Mr. Hornby, at the breakfast table, was reading the stock quotations to his wife, who always took an affectionate, if vague, interest in his business. Suddenly, as his eye moved over the paper, it lightened.

"Alas! Joan! Listen to this. Kitty: The alumni of the class of '62 (my class, you know; twenty-five years back) will hold a reunion at the university next month. There will be a banquet, speeches, etc. Well," folding the paper, "I'm glad of that. I wish the to see the boys again. Some of them have been very successful."

"Some more than yourself, John."

"No, probably not."

The rich banker nodded thoughtfully, he was not a poor penniless man. Still, he had given twenty years of his life to money making, and naturally he fully appreciated the value of money.

"I've not done badly," he said. "There's Tom Hare, too, Tom is head of the largest wheat syndicate in Illinois, and Carlton—he is president of a railroad. Dunscot is a United States judge, very nice little competency. The boys have done well—by themselves—most of them."

"Except poor Will Morgan," said Mrs. Hornby, with a sigh.

"Yes, yes. Will, Morgan was obstinate. Kitty. He has himself to thank for all his troubles. When he left college I said to him: 'You have a few hundred dollars, so have I. I come to invest mine in acres land in the northern Illinois. Go in with me. It can be bought for a song, but the town is going out that way. In ten years cut up the land into lots, and we shall be rich men.' He saw the truth of it. Morgan's no fool; but he said, 'I want here that money to educate my for the ministry,' and into the ministry he went. I bought the land and—here we are. I honor Mr. Morgan. He's a high principled fellow. But——

Mrs. Hornby was asked for a few minutes, then she said:

"I suppose Will cannot afford to come to the reunion?"

"No, indeed. He has a little missionary church among the coal miners at $600 a year. He has five children."

"Poor Rosy!" "He married Elizabeth Wynne, you know. She was a dear friend of mine, a delicate and faithfull girl. John?"

"Yes, Kitty."

"Why can we not ask Will and his wife to the reunion—here, to stay at the house? Buy the railway tickets today, and let me write and invite them in the letter."

"A good idea! I'm glad you thought of it, Kitty. I shall be glad to give a little pleasure to the poor creatures."

As he was going out of the door he stopped.

"They'll be very shabby, you know; they will look queer among your other guests," he said.

"That matters nothing to me," said Kitty hotly. "My social position does not depend upon the clothes which my friends wear."

But when, a week or two later, the poor clergyman and his wife arrived, she was startled out of her usual calm complacency.

"They have the pinched, wan faces of people who never have enough to eat," she said to her husband. "Nor are gown is one of her wedding dresses she looks as if she had come out of the Ark. And the Mercers and Towers are coming to dinner tonight. Something must be done at once."

"What does it matter? Morgan has been with me all day," said her husband. "Nobody thought the worse of me because his overcoat was patched."

But Mrs. Hornby hurried out of the room. In a few minutes she tapped at Mrs. Morgan's chamber door. She carried a pretty dinner dress; it was fashionably trimmed and a little soiled.

"Dear, dear, we used to be just the same size. Won't you wear this for me?"

Mrs. Morgan glanced at the gowns and then at her friend's face.

"I would prefer to wear my own, Kitty," she said quietly, "unless you very much wish it."

"I do wish it. Some people are coming for dinner"——

"I understand. I will wear it."

Mrs. Hornby laid down the dress and lingered uncomfortably.

"I meant to be kind, Rosy," she said.

The tears stood in Mrs. Morgan's gentle eyes.

"I know," she said. "This pride is wicked in me, I suppose. I am used to taking all clothes at home from strangers. But you—we were girls together, you know, and equals. And now to think that you have to clothe me that I may not disgrace you in the eyes of our friends. It hurts!"

The visit of the Morgans lasted a week; it was the first time that they had come to their old home since their marriage, sixteen years ago.

"We never could afford it," Mrs. Morgan said to her host, the morning of his arrival. "If we ever saved a dollar or two it was needed for the children—dies of them, you know. Rosy and I could not spend it on ourselves, so you can guess the delight with which we read your letter and found that we would really see the old home again."

She gave her friends hand a lovely squeeze, looking into his face with glistening eyes. Much of William Morgan's power over men lay in his genial, effusive manner and in his gay courage. Among his old chums no one his laugh rang out as heartily as when he was a boy. This was during the first day of his visit, after that his wife refused that he grow grave and thoughtful. On the night of the banquet he came home with a haggard face, and sat down beside her without a word.

"Are you not going to tell me about it, Will?" she said. "You have been looking forward to this reunion as the happiest day in your life. Were all of your old friends there?"

"Yes," he said, rousing himself. "Only one or two were absent. It was very pleasant to hear the accounts of their lives. The boys have been very successful, as a rule. Two or three have made brilliant reputations at the bar, one is an eminent surgeon and several are enormously rich, like Jack Hornby. I—he stopped, rose and walked nervously to the window—"I, with a household of children, not starving on its hundred a year," he broke forth passionately.

Mrs. Morgan did not answer at once; usually her face turned bright and clear. But she was human, and she had seen Mrs. Hornby's butler glance at her gown tonight, recognizing it as one of his mistress', and Mrs. Hornby had caused her by showing her little girl's Parisian toilets for the coming winter. Mrs. Morgan turned over the dainty embroidery, smiling, thinking of her own girl's patched shoes.

"Why," she thought, "should this child be wrapped in velvet and furs while mine have not flannels to keep them from the cold?"

The question is as old as the world; so was the doubt that looked out of the eyes of wife and husband as they faced their life that night.

"The world tell and I made a mistake!" he said almost fiercely, turning on her. "I chose to serve God instead of making money. I thought I was right."

"You were right, Will." But her tones were dull and cold. "Let us go to sleep now. I wish we had not come here. I am glad we are going back to morrow."

They were at breakfast the next morning; the shabby little trunk had been sent to the station. The world probably looked different to them both in the healthy morning light. Mrs. Morgan's blue eyes had regained something of their happy calm. She was watching Lucy Hornby critically, and thinking that her own girls had strength or muscles and stronger brains with which to meet the world. Life had compensations, just as Heaven, after all. Her husband was talking to Mr. Hornby.

"I asked Tom Hare about the boys," he said, "but he evaded the question."

"No wonder! He isn't a man who went to the dogs. So did Carlton's boy. The usual story of American lads, heirs to huge fortunes, launched on life without work or sense of responsibility, and a vast sum to spend! Your sons will have a tremendous advantage in being poor, with education, high principle, and the necessity upon them of exertion. You may not see it, but it is true."

"I had not seen it," said Mr. Morgan with a sudden touch, which caused to cease from his heart. "I see it now."

Before they had finished breakfast the waiter came up to see Mr. Morgan.

"A lady to see you, sir. I told her you were going to leave town in a few minutes and were engaged, but she was very urgent."

The clergyman rose hastily and went down to the library. A woman plainly but comfortably dressed stood waiting for him. She came hastily to meet him, evidently controlling some deep emotion.

"I will not detain you, Mr. Morgan, but I may never have the chance to speak to you again. I have something to tell you."

"I am in no haste. Be calm," he said kindly.

"I owe all you. I owe my life—I owe more than my life—to you. I was a poor seamstress, ill paid, hungry, wretched. A married man who said he loved me offered me a home. I was in Harlsburg then. Oh, if you knew what the temptation was to me! I was so weak, so tired. Good! There was comfort, luxury. I had nobody, not even a friend, to be shamed by my disgrace. There was nothing to hold me back but the remembrance of my mother, and she was in her grave. I wondered the morning that evening afraid to go to my room and he alone. I came to the door of a little chapel. They were singing. I crept in to escape from myself in the crowd. You prayed and preached. Mr. Morgan, I shall always believe that God sent you that night to my lost soul, to bring it back to him. You prayed for me—me!"

Her sobs choked her; she turned away.

"I thank God if I helped you," said Will in a low voice.

"You saved me!" She came up to him and took his hand. "Every word you spoke was meant for me. You showed me Christ standing near me, ready to help. I went back to my work the next day. He did help me. I married an honest man who loved me, and we have prospered. I wish you could see my husband and children. But I felt that I must tell you that I owe all that I am to you."

When Mr. Morgan replied his voice was a fight to his eyes which had not been there for many days.

They had a long journey home, that day. The rain beat on the windows of the car, and the air was cold. At one of the stations two farmers came in who were members of Mr. Morgan's church. They took him with a cousin of delight. His wife's heart beat faster at the sight of the homely, kind faces. How they loved Will! For much he suffered in their lives.

"We thought you would be on this train," one of them said. "It is time you were at home. The village is got for you without you. Ned Hanley is at home from Montana and wants to interest Jessie back with him. They've been engaged for years, you know. They're waiting for you to cover them. I want his blessings on my marriage, Jessie said, with tears in her eyes, today."

"And old Mother Fiss is worse," said the other farmer, and she is afraid she 'will die before you come. She thinks if the parson's hands low she can go down quietly into the dark valley."

"Have you seen my children lately?" asked Mrs. Morgan.

"Bless you, yes. See them every day. We all look care of them. To tell you the truth, most of the folks will drop in to welcome you tonight. My wife and the other women have been building fires and baking cakes and puddings all day. Oh, you're no idea how we have missed you!"

As the train approached the station the nearer came to Will and touched his hat.

"You do not know me, sir?"

Mr. Morgan hesitated.

"Is it not Jennings?"

"Yes, Jennings," the man's face beamed with happy meanings. "Yes, sir. I have held this position now for four years. You will see my house at the next station—a pretty little cottage. My wife and the two babies are there."

"I am glad to hear it, Jennings; glad, indeed."

He wrung the man's hand cordially.

"I knew you would be glad." Jennings turned to call the next station, and then added hotriedly: "I don't forget, Mr. Morgan! I don't forget! and power out of the rut."

"Who is that, Will?" asked Mrs. Morgan.

"Don't you remember that poor, drunken John Jennings?"

"Whom you brought home and kept for him sake? And you have done all that for him! Oh, Will!"

She threw her hand into his in the darkness and held it close. How once in his poverty and pain purpose he came to the hearts of his people, of those poor Magdalenes and drunkards! Hand in hand with them he was leading them to heaven, to Christ. They loved him. God was with him.

The train stopped at their own station presently. There were the children waiting on the platform and a crowd of his people making a welcome.

"Oh, Will," she said, "I am glad that this is our home. You have chosen wisely."

Will made no answer. But as the people about he had helped and strengthened gathered around him, and as he caught sight of Jennings' happy face on the platform of the vanishing train, he knew there were higher successes in life than that of making money.—Rebecca Harding Davis in Congregationalist.

To Keep Up with His Grandson.

There is a good deal of humor in being a grandfather and a deal of personal satisfaction, generally speaking, in being a grandson, but one of the most pronounced proofs of happy relations between grandfather and grandson that I ever heard of is now going on in this city. The grandfather, about seventy years of age, has earnestly taken up the study of French because his grandson, about to graduate from the Michigan university, expects to spend the next two years in Europe as a finish to the acquirement of an education. When he returns he will, of course, speak French fluently, and the old gentleman does not intend to be found wanting in the direction.—Detroit Free Press.

Sewers Stops Disappear.

According to Professor George C. Comstock, of the Washburn observatory, Madison, Wis., the phenomenon of the disappearance of the stars of Saturn has just occurred. Once in fifteen years the earth in its motion about the sun passes through the plane of the rings of Saturn, so that they are edwise objects toward the earth. The rings are so thin that they then disappear altogether from sight in an ordinary telescope, while in the more powerful ones the plates appear to have a few needle thread through it. The appearance of the rings at the times of disappearance and reappearance is of special interest to astronomers, since it furnishes information with regard to the nature of these appendages not otherwise attainable.—Philadelphia Ledger.

A French System of Ventilation.

An ingenious application of electricity for ventilation has been brought out in France. An electric fan for noisy the current of air, which can be cooled by means of ice or other cooling agent. If hot air is required, electricity is sent through a series of meshes of wire, whose high resistance causes it to become hot, and the air passing through them is given the heat required.—New York Times.

Something Got Away.

"You say the chicken soup isn't good! Why, I said the cook how to make it. Perhaps she didn't catch the idea."

Boarder—No. I think it was the chicken she didn't catch.

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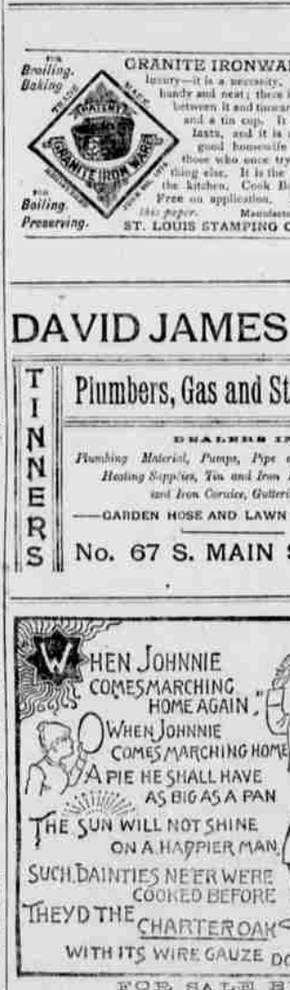

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