

THE EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, July 1, 1872.

THE ONE-DOLLAR BILL.

[CONTINUED.]
"I hope not, Josiah." "I'm afraid it's past hoping for," said the squire, shrugging his shoulders. "And now for a pleasant evening. How does rain fit in?"

And Mrs. Partlet kept the secret of the rain still within her own heart.

It was six months afterwards that the squire came into the room where his wife was preserving some great red apples into jelly.

"Well, well," quoth she, "wonders never will cease. The Ruddiloves have gone away."

"I don't know—out West somewhere with a colony. And they say Luke hasn't touched a drop in six months."

"I'm glad of that," said Mrs. Partlet.

"It won't last long," said the squire despairingly.

"Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know; I hav'n't any faith in American reform."

Mrs. Partlet was silent; she thought thankfully that, after all, Luke had not spent the dollar bill in liquor.

Six months—six years—the time sped along, in days and weeks, almost before busy little Mrs. Partlet knew that it was gone. The Ruddiloves had gone back to Sequoet.

Luke had made his fortune, as the story went, in the far-away El Dorado, vaguely phrased "Out West" by the simple Sequoeters.

"They do say," said Mrs. Buckingham, "that he's bought that're lot down opposite the Court-house, and is going to build such a house as never was seen."

"He must have prospered greatly," said the gentle Mrs. Partlet.

"And his wife wears a silk gown that will stand alone with its own richness," said Mrs. Buckingham; "I can remember when Luke Ruddilove was nothing but a poor drunken creature."

"The more credit he has now," said Mrs. Partlet.

"It's to all 'em stink," said Mrs. Buckingham, "with marble mantels and inlaid doors; and he's put a lot of papers and things under the corner one."

"The corner what?" said Mrs. Partlet, laughingly. "Floor or mantel?"

"Stun, to be sure, it'll be Mrs. Buckingham's. Like they do in public buildings, you know."

"That is natural enough."

"Well, it's a kind o' queer, but Luke Ruddilove never won't like nobody else. Folks think it's dreadful he should put a one dollar bill in with the other things."

Mrs. Partlet felt her cheeks flush scarlet; she glared up to where the squire was looking over a list of legal items in the bill he was reading out into some silence. But he never looked around, and Mrs. Buckingham went on with her never-ceasing flow of chit-chat, and so the color died away in her cheek. After all the money had been her own to give and the old clock in front of the dining room stove had answered very well.

She met Luke Ruddilove that afternoon for the first time since his return to Sequoet—Luke himself, yet not himself—the demon of intemperance crushed out of his nature, and its better, nobler element triumphing at last. He looked her brightly in the face, as he had out of hand.

"Mary," she said tremulously.

"I'm glad to see you back here again, Luke," she said tremulously.

"And well you may," he rejoined. "Do you remember the night you gave me the dollar bill, and begged me not to go to the tavern?"

"Yes."

"That night was the pivot on which my sole destiny turned. You were kind to me when every one spoke coldly; you trusted me when all other faces were averted. I vowed a vow to myself to prove worthy of your confidence, and I kept it. I did not spend the money—I treasured it up—and Heaven has added mightily to my little store. I put the dollar back into the bill, and none of my new house, for the house has been paid off and it's done. I won't offer to pay you back for I am afraid," he added smilingly, "the luck would go from me with it; but I'll tell you what I will do, Mary; I will give money and words of trust and encouragement to some other poor wretch as you gave to me."

The old Squire Partlet never knew what his wife did with the dollar bill he gave her to buy a new piece of oil cloth.

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