

HOW I LOST MY WIFE AND BABY.

[CONTINUED.]

"Shade trees—one current bush! Yard large enough for a cord of wood, saw-buck and a man to saw; and the neighborhood is quiet and moral, being near a small cemetery. Well, I know you wouldn't like the place. I'll search again to-morrow."

"That's right! Don't despair. Get the key to a yard that shall be large enough to take his hide by the sun, of course."

"Timothy! How can you talk so about our darling! Suppose we should lose Timothy?"

"Well, not suppose it. Try again, Lefty! Perhaps you'll run into the limits of our Spinster's treasury. We must leave here, as the Doctor rented it. So he told me to-day. Here's the morning paper. Let's see what places want a tenant!"

In half an hour she had a list of places to see the next day. We must find something, or Lefty will be in the street, which would be unpleasant, though economical.

It was all settled the next night. I knew it by her smiles. A lovely cottage, situated so and so, with two large parlors in front, and a backyard large enough to hold our week's washing on the line; half a mile walk, with "buses, cars, and none of the modern improvements."

"Hobson's choice, my dear," was my comment.

"The best we can get for our money, I think," she replied.

That settled it. The next day it would be the first of May according to calendars and landlords. My wife kindly volunteered to superintend the moving, as I should be busy all day and night at the store, transferring goods.

"Get the honestest and weakest expressman you can find, and then feel To move successfully, my dear, is an act more difficult than to win a battle."

"In theory, Tim, for you," said Lefty. "For you, to-morrow, it will be practice."

A look of grim resolution came over her face, and I felt that we were already half moved. I signed the lease, and then we went into the different rooms together that I might say or look good-by.

"We have been happy here," whispered my wife.

"We shall not leave the dormant echo of an unkind word"—which was the truth.

"I am thankful we had even this poor shelter," I said, as I closed the door to the last room visited, never again to be opened by me.

I had gone some distance that evening when I flashed upon me that in the confusion of my mind incident to business at the store and the many houses to rent, about which we had been talking, the location of our new home had passed entirely from my mind.

"Put it down on paper," I said to my wife, after returning. "I can't trust to my memory for a day or two." I put the slip in my pocket and turned away.

"Don't go, Tim!" spoke Lefty, with a sudden and unusual voice. "It was bad luck to come back again."

"Pshaw! An old woman's superstition. I'll see you to-morrow, all costed settled. There! Good-by! Good-by, Tim!"

"Good-by, papa," cried Tod; which cry I heard until I turned the corner, thanking God for giving me such a good, patient, loving wife and a baby so smart and strong as could be found in the city. "Isn't everybody has such blessings, not the half of them; more's the pity for the good of the world."

That was hard work we did that night for "Crutch & Armies." No one could let up until 3 o'clock in the morning, when we had a hot supper and an hour's rest. Then at 10 we went again for the day. I labored, in my thoughts, with my wife and her share of my trouble, and with wonderings as to how she was getting along, and performed my duties as mechanically as a steam engine. It was a very long day to me, and not one of the men was more glad than I when, early in the evening, Mr. Crutch came to the office door and said they thanked us very much for the way we had worked and what we had done, and that we might quit until next day. He guessed matters would run smoothly now. I was anxious to see my family, and hurried away. After rapid walking for a couple of blocks, I suddenly occurred to me that I was on my way to my old residence, and that the street and number had passed from my mind. It was lucky I had not depended upon my memory, and that my wife had given me a memorandum.

Stepping under the gas-light, I felt in the pocket where the paper should have been. It was not there. All the other pockets were searched, turned inside out, but the precious bit of paper was not to be found. It didn't matter how I lost it, it was gone. Then I tried my best to recall the location; but half a dozen numbers and streets came into my mind all at once. I had no trail to the home of my wife and child. At 9 o'clock, at night who could tell me where I lived? I was so worn out that this predicament brought the tears from my eyes for a minute. Approaching a policeman and I shivered. What would Lefty think of this absence? Where O where was she? When it came into my confused head that she had said something about Stewart Avenue, the number I could not recall. I started on a run for that street, and reaching it, wandered to and fro, scanning the windows to see her face, the houses to note if any of them answered the description she had given. Vain labor! Sick at heart I retraced my steps and went to police headquarters.

"What is wanted?" said a police official.

"An odd occurrence—I've lost my wife."

"Yes! Bless your soul that's not odd. Men come here with that news every day. Do you know the road—the train she took?" he queried.

"Pshaw! I don't mean that," with an angry feeling at his stupidity. "My wife moved on the first, and I have lost the address she gave me. It's funny, but I don't understand it. I added, apologetically, as two or three men began to laugh.

"Well, that is odd," the official, a captain, agreed; but I can't see how we can help you. "Nor I, just at present. You can advise me, perhaps."

"You don't know the street, you say. Do you know the express-man?"

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