

## THE GOOD OLD FARM.

"There's got to be a revival  
Of good sound sense among men,  
Before the days of prosperity  
Will dawn upon us again;  
The boys must learn that learnin'  
Means more'n the essence uv books;  
An' the girls must learn that beauty  
Consists in more'n their looks."

"Before we can steer clear uv failures,  
And big financial alarms,  
The boys have got to quit clerkin',  
An' git back onto our farms,  
I know it ain't quite so nobby;  
It ain't quite so easy, I know,  
Ex partin' your hair in the middle  
An' settin' up for a show."

"But there's more hard dollars in it,  
An' more independence, too,  
An' more real peace'n contentment,  
An' health that is ruddy an' true,  
I know it takes yours of labor,  
But you've got to 'hang on' in a store  
Before you can earn a good livin'  
An' clothes, with but little more."

"An' you steer well clear uv temptation  
On the good old honest farm,  
An' a thousand ways'n fashions  
That only bring ye to harm,  
There ain't but a few that can handle  
With safety other men's cash,  
An' the fate of many who try it  
Proves human natur' is rash."

"So, when the road to State prison  
Lays by the good old farm,  
An' the man sees a tollin' brother  
Well out of the way of harm,  
He mourns he hadn't staid there,  
A-tillin' the soil in peace,  
Where he'll yet creep back in dishonor  
After a tardy release."

"What hosts uv 'em go back broken  
In health, in mind 'n purse,  
To die in sight uv the clover,  
Or linger along, which is worse!  
An' how many mourn when useless  
That they didn't see the charm,  
The safety 'n' independence,  
Uv a life on the good old farm."

"So preach it up to 'em, parson,  
Just lay it out plain 'n' square,  
That land flows with milk 'n' honey,  
That health 'n' peace are there,  
An' call back the clerks 'n' runners,  
An' show 'em the peaceful charm  
That waits to cheer an' bless them,  
On father's dear old farm."

—New Hampshire Statesman.

## THE CONARDS.

The Conards, when I first knew them, lived in Elysium place; a mass of six hundred cheap, tawdry little houses, alike to the very door-bells, built by a stock company by contract, and dubbed Elysium place, in one of those whims of sentiment peculiar to the American mind. The rents were low. The thin, pretentious dwellings appealed to popular general instincts. Prosperous bakers and butchers; ex-millionaires, who had now no income but duns, and who wished to hide from the fashionable world more securely than could be done even in apartments *à cinquisme* in Paris; honest young married folks, just beginning life; lecturers on spiritualism; quack doctors; every variety of adventurers crowded into them. The gray, lace-curtained windows and silver-plated little doors turned the same jaunty well-to-do front to the world, no matter what crime or misery lurked behind them.

Baker, green-grocer and milkman, on their daily rounds, declared that the Elysiumites were a slippery lot, as to pay.

Old Mr. Vaughan, who had gathered the little congregation over the drug shop, made his daily rounds, too, in his brown linen coat and patched shoes; but he found the Elysiumites, from the life assurance agent to the bar-keeper at the corner, a family of God's well-beloved children.

"It is wonderful to watch the various dealings with them," he used to say, when he would come in at evening for a quiet cup of tea. "It is so easy to find the line of order and justice run-

ning through every life, if one only has faith." "Oh! undoubtedly," answering himself after a hesitating pause—"it requires faith sometimes to find it."

It was Mr. Vaughan who made the Conards known to me.

"Mrs. Conard," he said, "was Nelly Satterlee. I used to see her on her father's plantation, Virginian? Yes, Louisa county. A pretty, merry little chit. She has an A B C school in No. 311; but she doesn't seem to succeed. I'm afraid Conard and the five children are too heavy a load for her back. She's a friendless little soul. She hasn't an acquaintance in Elysium-place."

I found Mrs. Conard in 311. She was a faded, thin little woman, with large beautiful dark-blue eyes, still ready to laugh when there was any excuse for it. She wore a faded calico wrapper, she carried a coarse-looking baby on her arms; and another, but little older, hung whining to her shirts. The house was miserably bare and comfortless; the floors were covered with matting, worn into holes; the odor of stale tobacco hung over it all. The only costly article in the house was an oil painting, in a heavy gilt frame, of a big, florid, black-whiskered man. His oily hair was plastered down smoothly on his forehead. He held his gloves and a beaver hat in one hand.

"That is Mr. Conard," she said, with a shy pride. "It is taken just as he rose to make his speech on the Poggard Canal bill. Probably you heard of the speech at the time? It attracted great attention. Mr. Conard was in the Legislature then." She had her school (about a dozen children from the neighborhood, alive with all the vulgarity and aggressive gentility of their parents) in one of the three chambers. The bed was carried out of the room in the morning and back at night.

"I might use the dining-room; but Mr. Conard usually takes a late breakfast. And the parlor I must keep for him, of course. He enjoys his newspaper and a cigar there. A man must find rest in his own home. Mr. Conard overworks his brain so dreadfully.

Mr. Conard was a ward politician. He has been out of office for three years; but was now working hard to go back, by dint of much talking in the lager-beer saloons, halls for concerts, and groceries of Elysium place, where he was known as an eminent citizen and referee on all public matters. You heard constantly of "Bob Conard's" geniality and public spirit. Even Mr. Vaughan told me that he had a heart as big as an ox; and, indeed, to see him romp with the children and empty his wife's purse of market-money, bidding her let the young devils go to Street's and stuff themselves with candy," you would believe it.

He laughed a good deal at her school, "It is Ellen's whim," he said, with a flirt of his pudgy fingers. "I always indulged my wives (this is the second Mrs. Conard) in their whims, Madam. The fair sex, you know—the weaker vessels! They must be humored in their harmless little vagaries. I always was their slave. But Ellen is absurd as a teacher. She has not a particle of that practical capacity such as we find in the women of my State. I am from Vermont, Madam. A Green Mountain boy."

Mrs. Conard's little earnings were their only support; but he always received the bills with the same amused flip, chucking her under the chin.

"Going on with it yet, eh? Little hen, scratching away!"

"Won't you pay the butcher or some of the bills with it, dear Robert?" she would say, holding him by the coat.

"With this?" peering at it as if through a microscope. Tut! tut! Foolish child! Don't trouble your little head about the bills. Women know nothing about business. As soon as I am elected I'll pay them all out of my first week's salary, and kick every scoundrel of them out of my house."

"They are very kind to me, Robert."

"Kind to you! The plebeians! Kind to Robert Poindexter Conard's wife!" Then he would go to the tavern for something to appease his wrath.

But not all of the money went for liquor. Mr. Conard had a certain love for his family. Debt he would not pay with it, being one of the men who feel that the world owes them a living; but he would occasionally, in a fit of generosity, bring home some gift—a pair of white gloves for Mrs. Conard or satin gaiters for one of the girls.

He was quite just in his verdict on his wife. She was the very worst teacher that I ever knew. The little she had ever learned she remembered inaccurately. She would sit holding her head and pouring over decimals, while the boys turned summersaults or drew caricatures of her on the black-board. As for discipline, she never attempted it. When the twins (the ruffianly sons of the butcher family) fairly took possession of the schoolroom, or when her own children were impertinent, she broke down and cried, but said nothing. She worked hard enough to earn some sort of success. She was up before daylight and went to bed long after midnight—cooking, scrubbing, making the trousers for the boys or teaching, and always ready to fly when Mr. Conard whistled for her to black his shoes, hunt for his pipe, or otherwise wait on him.

Supper was a meal of which Mr. Conard never partook. A glass of wine or lager and a pretzel, he said, better stimulated his brains for the evening's work—whetted his wife. He came in one evening and found his wife still seated at the table, the boy baby on her knee, sipping her tea and laughing with the children.

"At it yet!" he cried. "What an appetite you have, Ellen! Don't sit munching your victuals all night, children. You are making mere animals of them, wife!"

"Oh! Robert," she cried, "this is the only hour's rest I have. I look forward to it all day." But she rose hastily, and that was the last of the tea-parties with the children. They did not regret it very much. They were all like their father but one—the eldest girl, Hetty.

With all her struggles, however, Mrs. Conard's house was illy kept and her children badly managed. Every day her inability and failures came to light more strongly.

"In another home," a friend said to Mr. Vaughan, "with money and ease and refinement about her, she would have bloomed into a most lovable, charming, helpful woman. Now where is the order or justice in such a life as this?"

The old man shook his head. "We shall see it some day."

Her one anxiety now was how to bring her children out of the slough into which they were sinking. She wanted to make them such men and women as the brother and sister whom she had lost long ago, who were still types to her of all that was most noble and pure.

"How can I do it," she said, "when there is absolutely nothing about them of beauty or refinement; nothing to humanize them?"

The poor little woman taught and prayed for them. But she did not understand that there was not a broad enough point of contact in their natures to give her a hold upon them. Excepting Hetty, they were like their father—stronger, shrewder, and with more hard common sense than she. They loved her in a patronizing way. They did not understand her, and she did not influence them.

She talked constantly of one plan which she had to help them. "The only talent I had, was a little skill in music. If I had an instrument and could teach them, we could make the evenings pleasant, and it would keep the boys off of the streets."

Suddenly the way was opened for her. An uncle in Norfolk, left her a legacy of two or three hundred dollars. It was paid into her own hands. She went out and cleared off every penny of debt; then came back with \$60, and ran to Mr. Conard with beaming eyes.

"I have seen a parlor organ, Robert. We can buy it with this. Will you go and look at it, and if you like the tone, send it home? Make them bring it to-night. Oh! boys, we are going to have such a happy time!" dancing around with the baby on her arms.

Mr. Conard thrust the money in his pocket,