

The Albany Register.



VOLUME XII.

ALBANY, OREGON, FEBRUARY 27, 1880.

NO. 72

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The Old Barn's Tenant.

BY B. F. TAYLOR.

The rooster stalks on the manger's ledge. He has a tall like a scimitar's edge.

A marshal's plume on his Afghan neck. An admiral's stride on his quarter deck.

He rules the roost and he walks the boy With a dreadful cold and Turkish way.

Two broadsides fires with his rapid trills This sultan proud, of a line of kings—

One guttural laugh, four blasts of horn. Five rusty syllables rouse the morn!

The Saxon lambs in their green tarts. Are playing school with the a, b, abs;

A, e, i, o! All the cattle spell Till they make the blattat vowels tell.

And half a hugh whinny fills the stalls. When down in the rack the clover falls.

A dove is waiting round his mate. Two chevrons black on his wings of date.

And showing off with a wailing note. The satin sultan of his golden throat—

It is Ovid's "Art of Love" re-told In a blinding fire of blue and gold!

Ah, the bronx girls that helped the boys. The nobler Helens of humbler Troys—

As they stripped the lusk with rustling fold. From eight-rowed corn as yellow as gold.

By the candle-light in the phinkin boots. And the gleams that showed fantastic boots.

In the quaint old lantern's tattooed tin. From the hermit glib set up within!

By the rarer light in the glibish eyes. As dark as wells, or as blue as skies.

I hear the laugh when the ear is red. I see the blush when the tortois's paid.

The cedar eaves with the ancient twist. The elder cup that the girls have kissed.

And I see the fiddler through the dusk. As he twangs the ghost of "Money Musk!"

The boys and girls in double row. Wait face to face till the angle bow.

Shall whip the time from the violin. And the merry pulse of the feet begin.

One Kind Act.

One dreary November twilight. Dead leaves raining down at every gust

of the inconstant wind—strange, spicy scents rising out of the ground—and new moon hanging like a sickle of blood over the purpled dark of the southerly sky.

Dreary and chilly, a dying year; a fast glowing dusk; yet the windows of Mrs. Osgate's old brown farm house hung out their cheery signals behind their fringed cotton curtains, and when the kitchen door opened, you could see the red shine of the blazing logs, the figures coming and going like a miniature magic lantern.

It was Dora Osgate who opened it, and came flitting out to the well, with a scarf shawl fastened over her head and an empty cedar pail in her hand.

As her light feet pattered over the carpet of autumn leaves in the pathway, she sang a snatch from that good old-fashioned hymn:

Back of ages old for me. Let me hide myself in thee.

"By goodness alive! What's that?" For as the words trilled sweetly from her tongue, a tall dark figure had risen from the low wooden bench under the apple tree, whose branches overhung the well.

"Don't be alarmed," said a deep, sweet contralto voice, with a scornful intonation in its sound. "It's only me, Dora; Joanna Elfield. What then? Have I fallen so low that I am no longer worthy to sit beneath the old apple tree? If so, tell me at once, and I'll quit."

"You know that I did not mean that, Joanna."

"It's hard to tell what people mean or don't mean, nowadays," said Joanna, picking at the mangy fringe of the frayed rag of a shawl. "I was tired, I wanted a drink of water, so I came to the old well. I'll go away if you say so."

"Joanna," said Dora hesitatingly, "are you hungry?"

"Hungry? No. There's a sort of a craving, though in my stomach, which is next to it, I suppose."

"Would you like something to eat?" "I don't beg."

"Wait a minute, Joanna."

Like an arrow Dora Osgate shot back into the house, where her thrifty mother was just getting the tepid on the table. Fresh baked waffles steamed on one side; hot biscuits were piled in drifts of snow on the other; preserves gleamed redly through the cut glass of the small dish, and liquid honey oozed from a lump of comb. For Mrs. Deacon Peabody and her daughter Comfort were come to tea, and Mrs. Osgate was a housewife to be excelled by none.

"Come Dora, quick with that water," said Mrs. Osgate, "and shut the door. What do you suppose is the use of fires, if—"

"Mother," said Dora, speaking in a slightly embarrassed tone, "Joanna El-

field is out by the well! She is cold and hungry, and—"

Mrs. Osgate's face hardened into lines of stone. Miss Comfort Peabody drew her skirts close around her with an involuntary movement and Mrs. Peabody looked hard into the bowl of her teacup.

"Then let her stay cold and hungry for all of me! Joanna Elfield is no associate for either you or me, Dora! She has run away from home, and acted with common strolling play actors—she has sung at low concerts instead of keeping that fine voice of hers for the temple of the Lord—she has, of her own free will, given up all that is decent and reputable, and people do say that she has taken to drinking! And you expect me to open my door to such a her?"

Mrs. Peabody uttered a sympathetic groan.

"But, mamma," faltered Dora, half frightened at her own boldness, "don't you remember that He came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance?"

"Silence, girl! How dare you quote the Scriptures to me?" cried Mrs. Osgate, her stern brows clouding over darkly. Bring in that pail of water at once, and let us have no further discussion."

Thus rebuffed, Theodora Osgate crept back into the chill, frosty twilight dejected and empty handed.

"Ah," said Joanna Elfield, shortly. "I thought how it would be! Well, it's nothing new. Everybody's doors are closed against me."

"Is it true, Joanna?" whispered Dora, coming close to her.

"Is what true?"

"That you drink?"

"Of course it's true. You would drink if you were driven as I am. Driven and hunted! There are times when you would sell your whole soul for a chance to be found in—drink."

"Oh, Joanna, I am sorry for you."

"Sorry! say that again, lass! people have mostly left off being sorry for me," said Joanna with a hard laugh.

"But listen, Joanna. Do be serious. Won't you do differently?"

"I am not so bad as the folks think me, Dora Osgate, except the horrid craving for drink. I have been nothing worse than wild and willful. Defies me, child, for it is God's truth. Only, when a girl gets on the down hill, every Christian man or woman thinks it is their duty to give her yet another push."

"Then you will try to rectify your own self?"

"How can I? What is there left for me?"

"Your superb voice, Joanna."

"You would have me sing myself in to respectability, eh? And in the meantime I should starve."

"You need not starve, Joanna. Here! Quick as lightning, she drew a small gold chain, with a locket-shaped like a heart dangling at its end, from her neck.

"Dear Joanna, take this. It is worth money, I know, and it is all I have in the world to give. Sell it and use the money for your own needs."

Joanna Elfield started vaguely at the gleaming trinket.

"Are you in earnest, Dora?"

"Of course I am. Hush! Mother is calling me. I must go."

"God bless you for this," said Joanna huskily. "And, Dora—our word there; I'm lovely, Joanna Elfield, but—if you will, let me kiss you just once."

By the way of answer, Theodora Osgate threw her arms around the tall girl's neck, and pressed her soft, cold lips close to the other's cold mouth. And as she did so, something plashed on her cheek—a hot, round tear.

The next minute Joanna Elfield disappeared into the world of shadows that was hovering over all the autumn landscape. And as she went she murmured, unconscious that she was speaking aloud:

"Some one believed in me yet! I'm me! It's a strange sensation, and yet it gives one something to live for, after all!"

"Dora! Theodora! Why don't you answer? But no one thinks it worth while to listen to me nowadays."

It was Mrs. Osgate's shrill, piping voice; and Mrs. Osgate, helpless from paralysis, sat in her cushioned chair in the sunny doorway.

"What is it, mamma?" asked Dora, coming to the door.

The Osgate farmhouse had drifted sadly to decay. Fences had fallen; gates hung creaking on one hinge; sun-dried pastures were neglected; grass meadows had toppled over with their own weight of harvest. And Mrs. Osgate herself looked, as she sat in the doorway, like the very genius of decay.

"The carriage with them grand people that has bought the Glenwood place. A gentleman dressed like the Prince of Wales, and a lady whose diamonds flash fit to blind one. Ah me! It's a fine thing to be young and rich. Look! the carriage is stopping! Perhaps they have dropped something. Sure as I live the lady's coming back, trailing her purple silk dress in the dust like it was domestic gingham. Oh, dear me, I wish I had my best hat on!"

She gave her apron a twitch and tried to settle her scant skirts over her poor, useless feet as the tall, stately figure swept up to the door.

"This is the Osgate Place, is it not?" the lady asked in a deep, sweet voice, that betrayed her at once. Dora answered promptly:

"This is the Osgate Place; and you are Joanna Elfield."

"Not Joanna Elfield now; but Joanna Avenel," she rejoined, smiling and flashing. "Here is my husband, George, this is the friend I told you of, whose hand, ten years ago, lifted me out of the darkness and set me in the right path. Oh, George, you don't know how much I owe to her!"

Mrs. Avenel was weeping softly now—yet the smiles shone brightly through her tears.

"Dora," she added, "that was the turning point in my life. See! I have your gold chain with the heart yet. I know then that one human being had faith in me still, and it renewed the fountain of life within me! Dora, Dora, you are my guardian angel. God bless you for it!"

People wondered much that those rich Avenels of the Place had an insignificant clerk like Dora Osgate so much with them, to say nothing of that tiresome, prying old bore, her mother. But Mrs. Avenel was a great lady, and of course could be excused for having her whims—some of which was always to wear a thread-like chain of gold about her neck, with a heart-shaped locket hanging from it.

"When she could have diamonds instead," said Miss Comfort Peabody, who had of late observed that she had always thought Joanna Elfield to be a genius.

And Dora Osgate, although she had settled into a solitary, hard working old maid, knew that her apparently purposeless life had not been in vain.

"For there is joy among the angels of Heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

Democratization consequent on Irreligion.

Once let men thoroughly believe that secret crimes have no witness but the perpetrator; that human existence has no purpose, and human virtue no un-failing friends; that this brief life is every thing to us, and that death is total, everlasting extinction; once let men thoroughly abandon religion, and who can conceive or describe the extent of the desolation which would follow?

We hope, perhaps, that human laws and natural sympathy would hold society together. As reasonably might believe that, were the sun quenched in the heavens, our torches would illuminate, and our fires quicken and fertilize, the creation. What is there in human nature to awaken respect and tenderness, if man be the unprotected insect of a day? And what is he more, if atheism be true? Erase all thought and fear of God from a community, and selfishness and sensuality would absorb the whole man. Appetite, knowing no restraint, and poverty and suffering having no solace of hope, would trample in scorn on the restraint of human laws. Virtue, duty, principle, would be mocked and spurned as unmeaning sounds. A sordid self-interest would supplant every other feeling, and man would become, in fact, what the theory of atheism declares him to be—a companion for brutes.

Were the proposition to choose Presidential Electors by Congressional districts applied in all the States, it would give the majority of the oldest politicians to predict the result of the next election; it would, however, be more likely to fairly represent the will of the people than our present method of electing.

How She Was Saved.

At Baden Baden, about twenty years ago a Hungarian count, Christian W., and his daughter Helen came to pass the season. The young countess, charming and beautiful, and heiress to a large fortune bequeathed her by her mother, was soon surrounded by a host of admirers. She speedily became captivated by one of the most worthless of her suitors, Carl M., because he had a handsome face, and long, black, wavy hair, wafted with exquisite taste, danced marvelously, and possessed rare powers as a singer. Carl was a noted gambler and given to dissipation, and Count Christian became possessed of information in consequence of some scandalous adventure in which he had been implicated.

Helen was so completely infatuated with Carl that she gave no heed to the advice, the prayers, or even the orders of her father. She would not believe the reports of the disgraceful antecedents of her wily lover. The condition of affairs brought the old count, possessed of a remarkable degree of firmness, to the determination of originating some plan whereby he could effectually overcome the persistent efforts of Carl to secure his daughter, as well as convince Helen that to save her from such an unprincipled man was a deed of paternal tenderness and care.

The chevalier had continued adroitly in his work of ensnaring the young heiress, and finally in direct terms asked her to elope with him. He wrote a note proposing a clandestine meeting at an hour when her father was in the habit of going out to play whist with some gentlemen of his acquaintance, that if she favored the proposition she wear in her belt a rose as a sign of consent. Count Christian, having intercepted the letter, took occasion soon after to approach Helen, and asking her to go out with him, at the same time handing her a flower, remarking: "Put this in your belt as an ornament." She smilingly obeyed. In course of their walk they met Carl, who bowed, and was overjoyed to notice that Helen had carried out his request.

The Count conducted his daughter to the residence of one of their acquaintances and requested her to wait until he called for her. This done, he returned to the house he occupied on the outskirts of Baden. He had sent away his servant, and was alone. At the appointed hour Carl arrived and leaped over the garden wall. Finding the door securely closed, he entered the house through one of the windows. With pleasurable excitement he hastened towards Helen's apartments, but great was his astonishment to find her father armed with a brace of pistols. The Count closed the door, and said to the miserable chevalier:

"Carl M., I could kill you; I have the right to do so. You have entered my house at night; you have broken into it. I could treat you as a felon—nothing could be more natural."

"But, sir," said Carl, trembling, and in an almost inaudible tone, "I am not a robber."

"Not a robber?" exclaimed Count Christian. "What are you, then? You have come to steal my daughter, to steal an heiress and a fortune. I shall show you my mercy. If you refuse to obey me I will slay you."

"What is your will, sir?"

"You must leave Baden this instant, you must put at least 200 leagues between it and you, and never come into the presence of my daughter. For your traveling expenses I will give you 20,000 francs."

Carl endeavored to speak.

"Silence!" said the Count, in a voice of thunder. "You must obey. In that secretary is the money; take it."

The chevalier ventured the remark: "Permit me to decline your offer."

"The false modesty of the young man was overcome by the imperious gesture of the old man."

"But," said Carl, "the secretary is locked."

"Break the lock, then," returned the Count, and with his pistol in his hand he repeated, "break it, or I'll blow your brains out!"

Carl obeyed.

"It is well," said the old gentleman. "those bank notes are yours. Have you a pocket-book, with anything identifying it as belonging to you?"

"Yes."

"Then let it fall in front of the secretary which you have broken open."