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Selected Story.

THE THREE LOAVES.

The day was bitterly cold in Virginia City, as winter days most generally are in that Alpine town, and though the sun was bright, it was as cheerless and chill almost as moon-beams.

Wild gusts whistled through the streets, breathing icicles and frost in their furious course, and driving every living thing away to seek shelter from their biting, penetrating breath.

And yet not every one was housed and sheltered from the pitiless gale, for he who had work to do or business to transact was summoned by inexorable duty to come forth to his post, or else, when the day of reckoning came, abide by the consequences; but with such exceptions as these, the male population generally sought the warm and friendly atmosphere of the drinking saloons, where with "hot Scotch" and a glowing fire they managed to keep themselves from freezing.

Of these luckless exceptions Abe Denning, the baker, was one. In sunshine or storm, hail, rain or snow, people must eat—eat, in fact, all the more vigorously because it does hail or snow, as if to perpetrate an unseasonable joke on the baker, who, especially in appetizing weather, must see to it that his customers' larders be properly stored with the best productions of his oven.

Even such cold weather as this did not deter Mr. Denning from attending to the wants of his customers with the assiduity and attention characteristic of his class.

While disappearing into a customer's house with an armful of bread, a girl of some fifteen years of age emerged from a miner's cabin close by, and, first casting wild and hurried glances about her, rushed to the baker's cart, and had just abstracted therefrom three loaves of bread, and was carrying them off, when the baker returned and caught her in the act.

Unfortunately an officer was passing just at the time, and the baker, on the spur of the moment, and without giving the case the consideration which he otherwise might have given her into custody on charge of theft.

The girl, without attempt at expostulation or explanation, burst into an agony of tears, a sufficient evidence, perhaps, that she was but a novice, after all, in the art of stealing.

"Don't take me in this way. Let me wrap a shawl around my head, or the people will know me."

The officer, consenting, accompanied her into the cabin, the baker having driven away, telling the policeman he would be in court next day to prefer the charge before the Police Judge.

The officer on entering found no one in the cabin but three children—the youngest about three years old and the eldest about six.

The two older children, alarmed at the presence of an officer, exhibited discolored eyes and faces, which bore evidence of suffering and recent tears, while little Willie, the youngest, was crying and inappreciable, moaning aimlessly around the cabin, looking into the empty closet and putting his little hands mechanically into the empty dishes on the table.

"What made you steal the bread, my girl?" asked the officer.

"The mother of the ward bread, little Willie looked tearfully and piteously in the man's face. The girl gazed the little fellow frantically in her arms, covering him with tears and kisses.

"Oh, my poor little brother!" she cried bitterly. "What will become of you now! This man is going to take your Lena away with him."

Here the child threw his arms around her neck, as if to detain her by force; while the other two children screamed fit to break their hearts.

The officer, suspecting the real state of affairs, began to cough convulsively, but instead of applying his hand to his chest or throat, as most people do on such occasions, he applied his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Is there no coal, or nothing at all to eat in the house?" said he, in a gurgling sort of voice.

"No coal, no bread, nothing at all," replied the girl, wringing her hands, "and poor Willie and the rest of us yesterday had nothing to eat since yesterday morning."

Here the officer had another hard fit of coughing, and went away saying that he would be back again in a short time.

"Is the man going for bread?" asked the oldest of the children.

"Hush, Mollie, dear," said Lena. "I don't know what he has gone for. He's not a bad man, anyhow, for he hasn't arrested me, as I thought he would."

In a very few minutes the officer returned with his arms full of bread and groceries, not forgetting some cakes and confections for the small children, while another man at his heels carried a big sack of coal on his back.

At the sight of the bread the children screamed with delight, while the officer now laughed, now coughed, and frequently applied his handkerchief to his face to wipe off the perspiration, as it were.

While Lena cut up large slices of bread, and helped the children and herself, the two men set to work and made a large fire in the stove, the glow of which soon suffused warmth and comfort through the cabin. Then they cooked the meat and made the tea, and spread a steaming meal on the table for the four orphans, while they carved and attended to their wants until they were fully satisfied.

Happy, happy childhood, whose progress is innocence, mirth and joy! The children after their dinner did not look like the same children at all. Their faces were bright and joyous, happy and handsome, and in a few minutes they were playing and laughing and romping, as happy as if they had never felt the pangs of hunger.

"And now," said the officer, delight-

ed at seeing the children so happy, "sit down, Lena, and answer me a few questions. Have you no father or mother?"

"We have no mother," was Lena's reply. She died about a year ago, and father went to Eureka to work about eight months ago, and we haven't seen him ever since."

"What is your father's name?" "Dawson—Jim Dawson."

"And he has sent you no money—nothing?" "Nothing. Never heard of him since he went away. But when he was going he left us a bag of flour and lots of groceries and things—as much as would last us six months, and he'd be sure to be back before the provisions were all out."

"And you have got no letter from him at all?" "Not one," replied Lena, with a deep sigh.

Poor Dawson had written to his children, however, but the postal communication being at that time very irregular in the Silver State, the children did not receive his letter.

"Well, I must go now," said the officer after a pause, "but I will call tomorrow and you will have to accompany me to the police station, for I must do my duty, you know. Good-by."

And Lena Dawson was left alone with her little brothers and sisters. She felt sad and lonesome after the departure of her kind benefactor, but the buoyancy of childhood soon gained the ascendancy, and before bedtime the orphans were as happy as any group of children in Virginia City.

Meantime the report about the stealing of the bread and the destitution of the children got abroad. Jim Dawson, a miner himself, was well known and popular among the miners, and the case created much sympathy and elicited so many remittances and contributions that quite a crowd was attracted the next day to the police court.

Justice Moses presided. The Judge bore the name of being upright and honest, kind and benevolent, and if fault he had at all, it was thought to be somewhat uncompromising rigor in the discharge of his official duties. It was hard to see how the case would go.

After the transaction of some preliminary business the case was called. The baker swore to the stealing of the bread, and identified the defendant as the thief. The officer testified to the famishing condition in which he had found the children, but said not one word about what he had done to relieve them.

Poor Lena stood trembling before the Judge. Thereupon a miner rushed through the crowd and stood before the bench, eyeing the Judge with a deprecating look.

"I declare to Almighty Judge," said he, "I never knew the condition of Jim Dawson's children, and if I did—"

The miner dropped a twenty into Lena's trembling hand.

"You just knowed as much about it as other folks," exclaimed another miner, excitedly, walking up and putting another twenty into the girl's hand, and with an indignant air that flung back any latent suspicion that he knew anything of the children's great destitution any more than any one else.

Here Long Alex, a miner—so called on account of his height and size—timidly and bashfully up to Lena's side.

"Twenty," he said, in a half whisper, "hold your pinafore," and he slipped two twenties into her apron, and then slid back behind the crowd into a corner, and holding his hat to his face, glanced timidly around to see that he was completely out of sight.

Then came Wabbling Joe, who was far more bashful than Long Alex, but up on a bold face, and laughed and talked loud to make believe that he was not bashful at all.

"Gentlemen, I appreciate you liberally, and adding functionally at the court, to disarm of any suspicion of possible rigor in the trial of the case in hand—"

"Judge, let the gale blow. She ain't done nothin' but what you or I would do if we was hungry."

And poor Lena was once more the recipient of another present.

The court held down his head and smiled gravely at Wabbling Joe's defence of the accused, but immediately recovered his gravity, and said:

"Gentlemen, I appreciate you liberally, and generous sympathy for the young offender, and an particularly impressed with the ingenious defense of my friend Wabbling Joe,"—here a good natured laugh escaped the whole crowd, as if to put the judge in good humor, "whatever might be the sympathy of the court for the said condition of the accused, there is a public duty to be performed, and the ease must therefore proceed."

"What is your name, my girl?" asked the court.

"They call me Lena Dawson, sir," was the reply.

"Call you Lena Dawson? And I suppose Lena Dawson is your name, is it not?" observed the Judge.

"No, sir, it ain't," returned the girl, "my father died when I was only three years old, and my mother married Mr. Dawson some time afterward. My proper name is Madaline Winters, but they call me Lena for short."

"Madaline Winters? Where were you born?" asked the Judge.

"In Kansas City, sir," was the reply.

"In Kansas City?" asked the court in a voice of still deeper gravity than before. "And what was your mother's maiden name, do you know?"

"Madaline Moses, sir," responded Lena.

"Madaline Moses! My God! My God! She was my sister!"

And Judge Moses, overcome with emotion, bowed his head to the desk while a torrent of tears flowed down his face.

Just as the crowd, in obedience to the dictates of delicacy, were emerging from the police court, to let the uncle and niece indulge in the sacred joy of

mutual recognition, Jim Dawson appeared at the door, having just returned from his prospecting tour in Eureka, and with an innate sense of propriety that did honor to his acquaintances, who were all rejoiced to see him, was quietly permitted to join his relatives inside.—San Francisco Argonaut.

GENS OF THOUGHT.

Humor is wit and love combined.

Malice drinks half its own poison.

Truth may be outraged by silence.

Spoken words can never be recalled.

Do not mistake a temerity for a fall-out.

The night shows stars and women in a better light.

We are all slaves of the law, to live free of power at last.

To give pain is the tyranny, to make happy the true empire of beauty.

A slave has but one master; the ambitious man has as many masters as there are persons whose aid may contribute to the advancement of his fortune.

When a book raises your spirit and inspires you with noble and courageous feelings, seek for no other rule to judge the work by; it is good, and made by a good workman.—La Bruyere.

As for being much known by sight, and pointed out, I cannot comprehend the honor that lies withal; whatsoever it be, very meagrely has it more than the best doctor.—Cowley.

Angry and choleric men are as ungrateful and unsober as thunder and lightning, being in themselves all storm and tempest; but quiet and easy natures are like fair weather, welcome to all.—Clerndon.

Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders generally discover everybody's face but their own—which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it.—Swift.

Men do not often take to avow, even to themselves, the slow progress reason has made in their minds; but they are ready to follow it if it is presented to them in a lively and striking manner, and forces them to recognize it.—Milton.

If the memory is more flexible in childhood it is more resolute in maturity; age, if childhood has sometimes the memory of words, old age has that of things, which impress themselves according to the clearness of the conception of the thought which we wish to retain.

SHOOTING WHALES.

The "modern improvements" in the whale fishery are as remarkable as in other industries, though not so generally known. One of the most noteworthy of these is the javelinboat, an account of which Mr. Voy of San Francisco has lately sent to La Nature. It consists of a metallic cylinder terminated by a conical bomb, at the end of which is a rod with a very sharp, barbed point. This projectile is sent off by a kind of arquebus rested on a thin, vertical support, and on the shoulder of the man who fires. At the moment of firing, a small screen rises automatically to protect the person of the man who fires, and