

THE SENTINEL

JENKINS AND SMITH'S NEW CLERK.

Jenkins met Smith, his senior partner, at the depot, who had been absent on a business tour.

"How's business?" inquired the latter.

"All right—got a new clerk."

"Got a new clerk, eh? Where's Jones?"

"Discharged him. An idle, extravagant young dog."

"True enough: and the new one won't do any better. Drinking, gambling, late hours, fast horses—that's the way with them all." And Smith groaned.

Jenkins' eyes twinkled. He well knew the peculiarities of his goodhearted but eccentric bachelor partner.

"Well, the new clerk don't drink or gamble, I'm certain of that, and has thus far been very industrious and attentive."

"Thus far? Oh, yes! Wait a month. New brooms sweep clean."

"Oh, well! If the new clerk don't suit you I can send the new clerk adrift, that's all. I only took her—ahem!—the new clerk on trial."

Mr. Smith stared at his partner.

"I suppose the new clerk has a name?" he remarked dryly.

"Oh, yes! Her—that is to say the new clerk's name is Gardener. But here we are."

As was his usual custom, Mr. Smith went through the store, past the array of clerks on either side of the counter without glancing to the right or left. But when he reached his private office, at the farther end, he looked through the glass door, which was so situated that he could see all that was going on in the store. As his eye fell upon the occupant of a desk near the door he started.

"What's that?" he said, turning sharply upon his partner who had followed him.

Jenkins gazed very composedly upon the slender form, whose graceful head was bent intently over a ledger that lay open upon the desk. "That? Why that's the new clerk."

Smith rubbed his eyes, and looked again.

"Why, it's a woman!" he exclaimed, with an air of incredulity and horror.

"I should say it was," said Jenkins coolly, "and a confounded pretty one at that."

Smith gave his partner a look of virtuous indignation.

"Mr. Jenkins, this is no place for a woman."

"No place? Now it strikes me that she fits the place very nicely."

"The proper place for a woman is the sanctuary of home."

This was a pet observation of Mr. Smith's, which he had read somewhere, and which he considered as a cliché in such an argument.

"But suppose she hasn't any?"

This was a poser, and in his effort to surmount it Mr. Smith got excited.

"Hasn't any? Why, sir, she must—she ought to have one."

"Very true. In fact, so confident am I on this point that I thought of offering her mine—or, at least, to share it with her."

Mr. Jenkins, this is not a fit subject for jest."

"It is a serious matter, I know; so, on the whole, perhaps I'd better think it over a while longer. Besides, there is no knowing if she would accept my offer together with the incumbency that goes with it."

"Jenkins!" returned Smith, severely, "will you cease trifling and attend to the business on hand? This woman must go."

"Very well. You told me you wanted a clerk that would be faithful and industrious; that didn't spend his salary and all he could steal on fast horses and the like, and I got you one. It's an easy matter to send her off."

"Of course it is," rejoined Smith, brightening at the suggestion. "Just tell her she don't exactly suit, and that we shan't need her after to-day."

"But she does suit me, and if you are not suited, all you have to do is to tell her so."

"You hired her."

"And for that reason I won't discharge her without some good cause."

"No matter," returned Smith, with an air of indifference; "I can discharge her. I think I am equal to that much."

Jenkins, who had left the room, put his head back a minute later.

"Bet you a hundred dollars you don't do it."

With this parting shot he disappeared.

Now Smith had a nervous horror of women, as his partner well knew—especially young women—and never spoke to one if he could help it.

Had it been a man, he would have known what to say, and experienced no difficulty in saying it; but a woman was quite another thing. His partner's last words had touched his pride; and summoning all his resolution, he opened the door and walked in. His courage failed him, however, as he came opposite the desk where she sat, and he passed by, glancing sideways at the unconscious occupant, who did not lift her head as he approached. After speaking to a clerk at the further end of the room he walked slowly back to where the young lady sat, and who, as he paused at the desk, raised a pair of soft, blue eyes, shooting a swift, bewildering glance at Smith that he felt to the toe of his boot.

"Miss—Miss—" he stammered.

My name is Georgiana," said the young lady, smiling.

"Well, Miss George—Georgiana—I am afraid that you will find your situation rather unpleasant."

"Not at all, sir. On the contrary, I find it very pleasant and comfortable."

"Ahem! But I fear you will be hardly equal to the discharge of its duties."

"Why not? If you will run your eye over the balance-sheet you will find everything correct."

With a desperate hope that there would be something amiss Smith did so, but was disappointed.

"I hope you have no fault to find?" said the clerk rather anxiously, on perceiving that he hesitated.

"You are a woman."

Here, whether abashed by the sudden display of dimples in the pink cheeks, that grew still more pink at his rather unnecessary assertion or not, Smith came to an abrupt pause. At this the smiling face settled into an expression of demure gravity.

I must plead guilty to the charge of being a woman. But though it may be a misfortune it can scarcely be called a fault. At any rate, it is one for which I am not answerable."

"You misunderstand me, ma'am. What I meant to say was that there are certain duties connected with your office, such as opening the store, going to the post-office, etc., which you can not very well perform."

"I assure you, sir, that I shall like nothing better than an occasional walk in the open air. And as to opening of the store, and sweeping and dusting, I don't know why it should be harder to perform that office for a store than for a house. I claim no consideration for my sex," resumed the young lady, casting a reproachful glance at the perplexed countenance of her employer; "but I ask, in common justice, if I perform my duties satisfactorily, that you will not discharge me simply because I am a woman."

Muttering a disclaimer of some kind—he hardly knew what—Smith beat a sudden retreat to his own room, assuming a bold front as he met his partner's inquiring eye, but with an inward consciousness that he had been totally routed by the enemy.

"Going?" said Jenkins, with the most provoked nonchalance.

"Well, no!—not to-day. What the deuce are you grinning at?"

"Oh! nothing—nothing at all," responded Jenkins, throwing himself back in his chair and regarding intently a fly upon the ceiling.

"What I was going to remark was," resumed Smith, with quite an unnecessary assumption of dignity, "that I have concluded to let the young lady remain until I can find some situation for her more in accordance with her sex."

"Very kind and considerate in you," said Jenkins, dryly; "especially taking into view that she does her work better than any clerk we ever had, and for less pay, too."

Smith was by no means the ogre he seemed. Aside from his prejudice, he was a sensible, kind hearted man. Georgiana was not called upon to open the store or run errands, though she offered to do both. Curious to relate, days and weeks passed, Smith's repugnance to her presence not only vanished with them, but he began to regard it with positive pleasure. He used to often look through the glass door, watching the graceful poise of the head and the motions of the delicate fingers as they glided over the paper, until at last curious fancies seemed to creep through his brain, and he began to indulge in glowing dreams of how wonderfully such a little woman as that would brighten up his lonely and cheerless home. But he determined to proceed cautiously. He had it. His housekeeper was about to leave; he would offer Miss Gardener the situation—and then? Having formed this resolution, his next step was to request the young lady's presence in his private office—a summons that was promptly obeyed.

"Miss Gardener, don't you think the situation as housekeeper in a quiet home, like mine, for instance, would be preferable to your situation here?"

"Perhaps in some respects it might," said Georgiana, coloring at this abrupt inquiry and the look which accompanied it. Was the old gentleman about to make her an offer. But his next words relieved her of her apprehension.

"My housekeeper is soon to leave me, and I should be very glad to have you supply her place."

"Georgiana's cheeks grew red, and her mouth dimpled with the smiles that she strove vainly to suppress.

"You are very kind, sir, but the fact is Mr. Jenkins has spoken to me first."

"Mr. Jenkins?"

Yes, sir. He asked me to be his housekeeper, and I told him I would."

"But, my child, Mr. Jenkins is a young man—it would not be proper for you to keep house for him. Now with me it is different."

And Georgiana inwardly agreed with him. In fact there was all the difference in the world to her.

"But he asked me to be his wife as well as his housekeeper."

"O-o-h!"

Smith's first feeling was that of intense astonishment; his next, of quite as strong chagrin. But it all ended in an emotion of thankfulness that he had not committed himself. His disappointment could not have rankled very deeply, for he attended the wedding, viewing, with smiling tranquility, the ceremony that had transformed his new clerk into the happy wife of his fortunate partner, Jenkins.

Miscellaneous.

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Jacksonville, June 25th, 1868. Jun 27-1f

NOTICE TO MINERS.

NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned B. F. MYER, has been duly appointed, and bonds approved,

U. S. Deputy Surveyor,

of Mineral Claims in and for Mining District, No. 1, the said district being defined in extent as in public notice issued from U. S. Surveyor General's Office for the District of Oregon, under date of Oct. 30, 1870.

All persons desirous of entering mineral claims in said district under the act of Congress approved July 22, 1866 and amendatory act approved July 9, 1870, must have the same surveyed by authority.

Mineral claims may be entered that are situated on unsurveyed lands as well as on surveyed lands.

All communications addressed to me at Ashland Mills, Jackson Co., Oregon, will receive prompt attention, as I will give all assistance in my power to claimants wishing to avail themselves of the law authorizing the sale of mineral lands.

B. F. MYER,

U. S. Deputy Surveyor.

Dated at my Office, near Ashland Mills, Oregon, March 24, 1871.—4fap

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Miscellaneous.

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