

OREGON SPECTATOR.

C. L. GOODRICH, EDITOR, PROPRIETOR AND PRINTER.

"FREEDOM FROM ALL FOREIGN INFLUENCE, IN THIS OUR OWN DEAR NATIVE LAND."

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NO. 1.

A Sketch of one of the Would Be's.

DRAWN FROM LIFE—BY VIOLA GRAY.

"Betsy, Oh, Betsy! run here, quick," screamed an old lady, from the back door of a little cabin.

"What do you want? Can't you wait till I get the rest of these potatoes dug?" returned the dutiful daughter, in no gentle tone.

"No! come along!" and the old lady lowered her voice, "there's a man a-comin', Betsy."

Betsy did not wait to hear more, but dropped her hoe in a hurry, and running in with all her might, did not stop till she gained her own bed-room, which was partitioned off from the sitting room by a single calico curtain.

"I say, Betsy, put on your blue dress, before ever you come out, and smooth your hair down, for he looks like he might be a real nice fellow, he is none of your country beaux, I know."

"Don't talk any more, Mother, or he will hear you," said Betsy, and at that moment the approaching stranger rode up to the fence, (for there was no gate) and bowing to the old lady, who stood in the door, inquired if this was "the residence of old Mr. Gay."

"Yes, sir, this is where he lives," said the old lady, courtesying as she spoke in the most polite manner possible, and then added, "won't you 'ste, sir?"

"Thank you, madam, I have a letter for your daughter, and if it would put you to no inconvenience I should be happy to spend the night with you."

"Certainly sir, you can stay as long as you please, for all the trouble, but I am afraid you will find our accommodations are poor."

"In this newly settled country it is not to be expected we shall find the fine residences and snug little cottages that abound in the more advanced Atlantic States," said the gentleman, as he fastened his horse to the fence. "You have quite a pleasant place here," he added, as he sprang lightly over the fence and approached the door.

"Yes, sir, I think it will be as pretty a place as there is anywhere around here, when we get it improved. We have been here some time to be sure, but we have had so much fencing to do, and the winters are so rainy, that we haven't got much of a house yet."

The stranger could not deny this last assertion, for it was a miserable cabin with hardly an apology for a window, so he remained silent.

"Mother, I wish you would send Sarah in here," said Betsy, very softly from the bedroom.

"Sarah, go to your sister," said the old lady to a little girl of about eight years, who was sitting up very straight in a large arm-chair by the fire-side.

"I wonder what she wants of me, I expect it's to hook her dress," said Sarah very innocently, as she went into the bedroom.

There was silence for a few moments and finally Miss Betsy made her appearance, blushing, up to the very eyes, and making a slight bow, took her seat on the opposite side of the room from the gentleman.

"This is my daughter, Elizabeth," said the mother, as the girl took her seat.

"Good evening, Miss Gay," said the young gentleman, "I believe I have met you before," and he advanced across the room and extended his hand.

"Oh! is it you, Mr. Allen? I did not know you at first," and she arose and shook his hand warmly, then took her seat again, while he seated himself by her side.

"I will make you acquainted with my mother, sir. It is a gentleman I met with at sister's, mother, you have heard me speak of him," continued Elizabeth.

"Oh, la, yes!" said the old lady, "but he said he had a letter for you, I wonder who it can be from."

"Excuse me, Madam," said Allen, "I had almost forgotten it. It is from your daughter, Mrs. St. Clair, who resides in Bellville, I left there yesterday morning."

"Did you leave her family all well?" inquired the old lady.

"With the exception of your daughter, who has a slight cold or something of the kind, I believe." So saying he handed the letter to Elizabeth, who opened it and began to peruse its contents.

"Haden't you better read it loud?" suggested the old lady.

"Let me look it over first, Mother."

As she read on she began to blush, and then smile, and finally arose hastily and went

into the kitchen. The mother followed, and so will we, notwithstanding it may not be considered very polite to leave the visitor alone.

"What is it, Betsy? I do tell," said the old lady, quickly, as soon as she had closed the door.

"Oh, nothing," and she turned away from her mother, but finally permitted her to look over her shoulder, where she read as follows:

"Bellville, Feb. 21st, 18—.

"Dear Sister Lizzie—I send this little note by Mr. Allen, who seems very anxious to carry it. He has just returned from California I do not know whether he has made much money or not, but Mr. St. Clair says he is certainly one of the 'upper ten,' so you must be sure to set your cap for him, and try hard, and I am sure you will get him, for he speaks highly of you, and made a great many inquiries as to whether you were going to return here, and 'continue at school or going to stay at home and learn to do house-work or, (the most important) going to get married. I told 'him, I did not think it was either. You could not attend school, and you already knew how to work if any one did, and I did not think you would be very apt to find any one up there who would suit you for a husband, so I thought you would remain just about as he last saw you. He said that was yet to be determined, and he intended to hear it from your own lips if you were determined to remain always the same. But I must let him talk for himself. I have no news, only your old friend Lucy Porter is married to that old-fashioned 'Mr. Burton, I should not have thought 'she would have had him after all the good offers she has had, should you? I suppose they will settle down on a claim now and never go anywhere or see anybody again. For my part I would as lieve die as live with such a prospect before me. I have not time to tell you of all my new dresses and other nice things, but you must come and see them for yourself. Tell 'mother if she will come down and see me. I will give her a new silk dress. Give my love to father and Sarah and the boys and tell them I should like to see them all, and believe me, yours ever, affectionately,

ELEEN ST. CLAIR."

Now we will leave the mother and daughter to comment on the letter, and return to the visitor. He is a tall man, full six feet high, and well proportioned, has black hair and an abundance of black whiskers which are fashionably trimmed; his complexion is quite dark, and his clothing is of the most fashionable cut. But between you and I his wash-woman, and his tailor, have not been paid for six months, and his board-bill has rather a formidable appearance even to himself, for he is just now thinking what he would do if he had two to take care of instead of one, could he get along in any way, and live in the style he would wish to (I), and he also wonders whether old Mr. Gay is as wealthy as he has been represented to be, and if he would be likely to assist him in the beginning, or not; and finally he comes to the conclusion that it is altogether probable he would, and even if he would not it would be some help to him to have a wife who was said to have a rich father, so he concluded he would run the risk, and try to win the girl.

Allen begged pardon for his inquisitiveness and then asked if there was any very pleasing news, or any thing of importance going on in Bellville.

She blushed, and replied it was only a little nonsense of her sister's.

Now Allen was perfectly satisfied with this nonsense was, and also that it had been pleasing to the reader. So he considered the business of his visit half completed. His meditations were however suddenly interrupted by the entrance of old Mr. Gay, who came in at that moment with a huge armful of wood, and approached the fire place to put it down, when he was stopped by Elizabeth who begged he would carry it into the kitchen.

"I don't know why it cannot lie here as well as it always has," said the old man sternly, throwing it down in the corner. He then turned around to take a seat, when he perceived Mr. Allen, and remarked:

"Excuse me, sir, I did not see you when I came in."

"It's my Father, Mr. Allen," said Elizabeth, and glad enough for an opportunity for escaping into the kitchen, she immediately avoided herself of it.

"It has been very pleasant weather for the last few weeks," said Allen after the old man had quietly seated himself by the fire.

"Yes, sir, but I think we are going to have a hard rain before long, by the looks of the sky."

"Do you? Well, I hope it will not begin before I get back to Springfield, for it is so unpleasant traveling in the rain."

"I should not be surprised if it rained before morning. We hardly ever have more than two or three weeks pleasant weather at this time of the year, without occasional storms."

But let us return to the kitchen. "Merfy on us! what are we thinking of to let Mr. Allen sit in there so long alone," exclaimed the half-frightened girl, at last, after having read her letter over the second time, and heard her mother's opinion of it, who you may be sure was pleased enough with its contents.

"I am sure I had forgotten he was here," said the old lady, "go in quick and ask him to excuse us, we were so busy reading, we neglected him."

Elizabeth did not need urging, but obeyed hastily. Upon entering the room she was somewhat surprised to see Sarah seated upon the visitor's knee.

"Why Sarah! you get acquainted quick, I am afraid Mr. Allen will think you are a forward little girl."

The tears came into Sarah's eyes, at being reproved before a stranger, but she replied, "He wanted me very much to come, and tell him about my chickens and flowers, and whether you—"

Here she was interrupted by Mr. Allen who put his hand playfully over her mouth, and told her that was all.

She smiled and seemed to take the hint, then ran off into the kitchen, as Elizabeth told her, her mother needed her assistance. Elizabeth now made her excuse for leaving her visitor so unceremoniously adding that the contents of her letter had so absorbed her attention that she had entirely forgotten his presence.

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her mother, her brother Joe came in and inquired what was the matter. Of course she told him all about it. He laughed, and told her if that was all, he would soon put an end to her troubles, as the wood should be brought out forthwith. So, after all Elizabeth carried her point and that satisfied her. Mr. Allen could see that she had some manners and taste about her if father had not.

All were now in great confusion preparing for supper. Elizabeth must go into the sitting-room and display her taste in arranging the tea-table.

Passing over the supper hour we find the family seated together round the fire-side, and Mr. Allen asked Miss Lizzie if she would not like to have a sing. She assented, and the books being brought out they had a fine time singing.

Frank Allen's great talent was for singing, and he knew it. The old gentleman, being very fond of music, was much pleased, and so the evening passed very pleasantly to all parties. Lizzie loved to sing, and loved to hear Mr. Allen, and once or twice during the evening he had looked at her so pleasantly, that she thought he really must like her singing.

But it was bed-time, and they had better retire the old man said, so Allen was shown to his apartment and the family went to theirs.

In the morning it was raining, as the old man had predicted, and he told Mr. Allen he must not think of leaving, for it would no doubt rain hard all day; and so it did, that day and the next, and so on for four days incessantly, and as the old people would not hear a word of Mr. Allen's departure, he remained with them, and you may be sure he improved his time well.

On the fourth evening as Lizzie and her mother were in the kitchen getting supper, Mr. Allen told the old gentleman, as they sat by the fire in the sitting-room, that he had rather an important question to ask him.

The old man looked up in surprise, and asked what it could be.

Now, Allen supposed the old gentleman would guess just about what it was, and partly save him the trouble of asking, and when he saw how surprised he was, he felt somewhat embarrassed, but he at length told him that he had met Miss Lizzie several times, at her sister's in Bellville, and that he had now seen her in her own home and he could not do other than admire, yes, love her; for her many good qualities had entirely won his heart. He had ventured to speak to her on the subject, and had ascertained that she was favorable to his suit, and he had now to ask Mr. Gay for the hand of his lovely daughter.

The old gentleman listened attentively, and when Allen had finished he turned around and looked in his face and said:

"Mr. Allen if you can take care of my daughter, and she loves you, take her. I shall never find fault with the choice of my child, for she should make her own choice for she is a woman who must abide by it, and I do not think it right for a parent to oppose a child unless he knows something against her choice that she is not aware of. Take her and may you be happy; and if you are poor, do not try to make the world think you are rich, but begin small and you can increase as your income increases. If, on the contrary, you are wealthy, do not be anxious that the world should know it; but rather be frugal in the beginning and then you may be sure of plenty in the end; I have never given any of my children anything at their marriage, for I think it best to keep my property until I have no longer any need of it myself, and then it shall be divided as I see fit among them; as I intend to give most to those who need most. I think it best for all to begin for themselves, and then they will know how to value what they have. I had nothing when I started in life, but by industry and perseverance, I have laid up enough to keep me above want as long as I live, and I believe it is the best way for a young man, to depend upon himself, for he will accomplish more than he will if he feels no need of exertion."

Allen thanked Mr. Gay kindly for his advice, and so the important subject was dropped.

But little did the kind-hearted old man know how much his good advice was needed, nor yet how little it would be heeded. His unexpected declaration that he gave his children nothing, put a damper upon all of Allen's cherished hopes. He had, however, gone too far to retract, and there was

nothing left him but to go on and do the best he could.

That night the family retired and left Lizzie and Frank sitting by the fire talking. And the vain creature believed him when he told her how her bright eyes and merry laugh had fascinated him upon the very first evening that he had passed in her society; and how he had traveled all the time since he left her striving to forget her, and that the image of her smiling face had never once left his heart. That indeed before he had become acquainted with her at her sister's he had watched her at church, and wherever he had seen her, and it seemed all the time that she was to be his own little wife at last, and I say Lizzie believed all this talk. Foolish girl!

But she is not the only one who believes all the nonsense these gentlemen of the world tell them. If she only knew what I do about Frank Allen she would turn him off in perfect contempt. Why, he had courted, at least, half-a-dozen since he saw her, and while traveling as he told her, striving to forget her, he had been in diligent search of a wife more suited to his refined taste, as he expressed it to himself; but as he was not very young nor very handsome, and had neither wealth nor talents to recommend him to the accomplished fair ones he attempted to win, he had been turned off by all, and had finally concluded she would do.

But what could she expect but deception from him, when she would not, for a moment, have had him think that she had ever done any work in her whole life, but set the tea-table, perhaps, or wash up the tea-things; make a few of the cakes and pies, or do the light sewing. To think that she, "Miss Elizabeth Gay," had ever dug potatoes, milked cows, fed pigs, chopped wood; and when her brothers were small had even been to mill and brought home sacks of flour before her on the horse, and had done the washing ever since she was old enough to handle the clothes. Why, she would as soon have thought of ordering him out of the house as to have let him know all this, for she felt sure he would have left soon after arriving at the knowledge, and so do I. On the contrary, she had been careful to give him to understand that she had never been an invalid from a child, and had never been able to do hard work but had always been treated like a lady, as no doubt she was intended for one.

Well, let them go! a suitable match after all—"six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other," as the old saying is.

The weeks wore away and every Saturday night brought Mr. Allen, who invariably stayed till Monday morning; and what a scrubbing and scouring there was on every Friday, and what nice pies and cakes were baked, and what fine sewing was arranged for Saturday, and when that day came what dressing up and smoothing of hair, till evening, for fear everything would not suit Frank.

Finally, one pleasant May morning it was arranged that Frank should come with a carriage on Wednesday night, instead of Saturday. And Thursday morning they were married and set out for Springfield. Father looked very solemn on the morning of the wedding, but was obliged to smile on perceiving the minister coming. Sarah ran into Lizzie's room and whispered "Betsy, Oh, Betsy! there's a man coming, hadn't you better slick up a little!"

When the newly-married couple arrived at the hotel where they intended boarding until Mr. Allen could get into business and procure a suitable house, there was not quite as large a crowd assembled to see the bride, as Frank had given Lizzie to expect. There were only the landlady, her daughter and myself, instead of the "number of lady acquaintances" which he expected would be in-doors awaiting his arrival. But Lizzie was too happy to care for the absence of any as long as Frank was there.

As I was boarding at the same hotel I of course paid Lizzie the usual compliments. Having met her once or twice before her marriage, and from what I had seen of her, I thought her a warm-hearted and artless girl, though wanting the polish and refinement which many consider necessary. I was not long however, in finding out her true qualities and disposition and was sorry when I saw how few of the first in society sought her acquaintance. There were a few, it is true, who were eager to pay her attentions, and some, who were acquainted with her sister Ellen, called early, but invariably made the remark after leaving, "how much she differs from her sister." By those persons whose society she sought for, and

aspired to, she was placed in the position her want of education, good taste and sensibility, would naturally assign to her, that of an inferior.

In course of time Mr. Allen obtained a situation as clerk in a store in the city. He immediately rented one of the largest and most commodious dwelling houses to be obtained, and began to purchase fine carpets, tables, sofas, mirrors, and every variety of furniture which he could procure in the country. And then followed suppers and evening parties, to which only the most select and refined of their acquaintances were invited. As a matter of course, all who were slighted dropped their acquaintance at once, and finally their circle of friends became very small.

A short time after Lizzie's marriage, a lady arrived in the place direct from New York. She was the wife of the merchant for whom Mr. Allen was clerking, and as her husband was very proud of his wife, and her many accomplishments he had been telling his friends of her, and the expectations of all were at the highest. On her arrival Mrs. Manners was received with a great deal of ceremony and notice by the friends of her husband; and Lizzie told her intimate friends she expected Mrs. Manners would be the leader of the "ton" in the city. Poor Lizzie! she had fondly dreamed that she might reach that envied height, for she knew her sister Ellen occupied it in the small town in which she resided; but she did not know that her sister's talent was far greater than her's, nor reflect that her own income would not admit of her living and dressing in the style her sister did.

Mrs. Manners tried boarding at the first hotel in the place, but it did not suit her taste and finally it was arranged she should board at Mr. Allen's. Well, a cook must be hired, as Lizzie's health was not good, and she could not for a moment think of doing work for boarders. As time passed on she began to think Mrs. Manners must be a superior being, for she was by far the most accomplished lady she had ever seen. Her wit was sparkling, her manners the most polished, her dress in the most perfect taste, her performance upon the piano, and singing unequalled. She was ever full of life and gaiety; and Lizzie really thought there never was another like her. What wonder that when Mrs. Manners, (or Geraldine, as she familiarly called her,) had a new suit, Lizzie must have one like it; or when she made a new dress, Lizzie's old one must be altered over, and made in the same style. This surely was not strange, for she wished very much to be in the fashion, and she thought if she followed Geraldine in every particular she could not fail.

But how were the money matters getting along at the store all this time! Not very well I can assure you. Frank had been dunned so many times of late that he finally told Mr. Manners he could not remain in his employ unless his salary could be increased. Mr. M. told him he was very sorry for it, but business was rather dull, and he had had about arrived at the conclusion to do without a clerk, but had delayed informing him as he knew it would be rather hard for him to get into business again; but now as an opportunity offered he thought he should be obliged to dispense with his services.

Here was a dilemma—a thousand dollars in debt, wife sick, dull times and nothing to do!

"Could you not manage to diminish your expenses?" kindly suggested Mr. Manners.

Frank said he did not see how he could, and live as other folks did. Ah, Frank, you had better have followed your father's advice, and began a little smaller.

It was a pleasant evening in May when Frank returned from the store, and threw himself upon the sofa, with a feeling bordering on despair, and when, after a few moments, Mrs. Manners entered the room, he did not even turn his head to inquire after his wife.

"I believe you have forgotten you have a wife," said she at length.

He turned quickly round and asked "why?" and then recollecting himself he asked how she was.

"She is getting better now. Her mother is here, and says she would like to have you come in and see her as soon as you should return."

"What! has her mother come down? I didn't know it; well, I must go and see her." So saying he went away and entered the room where his wife was. He dreaded to meet her mother, for he knew he could not hide his feelings, and the old lady would be anxious to know what was the matter