The East Oregonian.

MISSION OF A BIT OF LACE.

"Good gracious! I shall be crazy if things go on in this way much longer!" was the winding up exclamation of Burke Addison's distracting reverie. He was sitting by the open window in dressing-gown and slippers, fuming inwardly over the broken limb which had kept him in doors for weeks, his neglected business, and the state of things in the kitchen and all over the house. He was a widower, and a slip-shod lackadaisacal girl made an effort to perform the duties of housekeeper for him. He was rather a helpless, pitiful object, as the lords of creation are apt to be, unless there is a capable woman at their heels. He had been a widower over a year, and during that time he had a sweet taste of the difficulties of getting a good housekeeper. He had changed every few weeks. One indulged too freely in the use of stimulants, and in a fit of intoxication came near burning the house over their heads. Another helped herself to sundry valuables and took French leave. A third set before him such outrageously cooked dishes that he came near dying of dyspepsia one week and starvation the other, and so on until now he had one on sufferance whom he sometimes thought was worse than any of the rest, whom he vowed should be cleared out as soon as he was about again. He had begun to believe that there wasn't a capable woman in the whole city, at least none that he could lay his hands on.

He heard the patter of little feet along the entry, and the door was pushed open by a little girl of three summers or thereabouts, who entered holding up her little apron in which were some colored candies. "See what I dot from the candy man," she lisped, holding out her apron with her little chubby, soiled hands, and showing them to her father. Then sitting down quickly on the not over well swept carpet, she proceeded to regale herself with the sweetmeats.

He uttered a half despairing groan as he looked at her thin face, which was very pretty, when clean, but was now bedaubed with the colored candies to its utter disfigurement; her tangled curls looked as if they had not known brush or comb for a week; her stockings were soiled and wrinkled, and the trimming was torn from her dress in several places. "How the child is neglected!" he thought, watching her as, in blissful unconsciousness of dirt and disorder, she smacked her lips after each dainty morsel. "She is growing up like a weed, and her clothes look as badly as any neglected child of the street." He had a fine, sensitive taste for order and neatness, and the sight of Mabel was positively painful to him. When he had married he had made his home in a distant city from his own, and none of his relatives or those of his wife were near him.

"Something must be done," he soliloquized half savagely. "That girl is wasting more down stairs than her head is worth, I'll be bound. I shall have to take a day and look around as soon as I am better. I've sworn I won't advertise for them. I should be besieged by a host of husband hunters. It's plagued strange that no one of my acquaintance knows of a good capable person they can recommend."

At this juncture a girl in a soiled calico wrapper, that was short behind and long on both sides, opened the door. She had a dull, monotonous face, and looking at her one wondered what could be her mission in the world.

"What shall I get for supper, sir?"

"I don't care, anything you like," he returned shortly, well knowing that food was invariably spoiled in the cooking, and therefore it was superfluous to order. The girl looked at him dully, and then without reply turned and went down stairs. He grasped his crutches and hobbled around the room awhile to work off his impatience. Mabel began to laugh at his movements, which looked novel to her, and having finished her candy, got up and pattered along beside him.

"Go down stairs and ask Jane to wash your face and hands," he said in an irritated tone. He loved her, but it annoyed him beyond measure to see her in such a plight. With a suddenly sobered face and quivering lips the little one obeyed him, and then his heart smote him for his harshness. "I shall become a perfect bear before long," he thought. "Poor little motherless thing! I must be careful not to visit my annoyance upon her. She s a good little thing, and it isn't her fault that she is neglected."

He sat down again, and laid aside his crutches. He forgot the present for awhile, while memory went back and brooded over the past regretfully. Five years before he had been a proud, happy lover of Marion Leonard, a bright, sweet, loving, whole-hearted girl. It was the old story of love and misunderstanding. He had sent her a bouquet of hot-house flowers, and along with it a note telling her of his love, and requested her, if she returned it, to wear the moss rose buds in her hair at the party they were going to attend that evening. The boy, who carried them carelessly, lost the note, and when questioned by Burke on his return, declared that he had delivered both all right, being too cowardly to tell the truth. His heart sank like lead when in the evening he discovered that she had not worn the flowers. Then pride came to his aid, and mentally calling her a coquette for the winsome, smiling manner in which she had treated him for weeks past, he had almost ignored her during the entire evening and lavished marked attention upon Kate Denning, who was but too well pleased to receive him. With characteristic rashness, he, after a week or two, asked her to marry him and she accepted him, thinking her lot more blessed, for she loved him all along, and he loved Marion with heart and soul, but too proud even to seek an explanation after the slight she had put upon him, as he thoughtlessly led Kate to the altar. Then, a short time after the fatal step was taken the truth came out. He found out that Marion loved him devotedly and that her heart was breaking over the desertion. He had made an indifferent husband, for he could not forget Marion, and his wife, during her short married life, was not a happy woman. He was not unkind by any means, but she missed the affection she had a right to expect and pined over the disappointment. Since her death he had been thoughtless enough to take into his keeping the life of a loving, sensitive woman from no other motive than pique. Lately his thoughts had turned to his early love, but he had no clew to her whereabouts. After his marriage her father had died, and she being an only child, had drifted out into the world alone to earn her own living, he heard, for her father had left her very little property. "She may be married," he thought, "and if not she may have ceased to love me, but she is the one love of my life, and if I only knew where to find her."

With these thoughts in his mind, his eye wandered through the open window to the yard below. They were back yards, but pleasant ones for all that, with clean brick pavements, with beds of bright, fragrant summer flowers here and there, grape vines and other shrubbery clinging on trellises, in all making a perfect picture of summer bloom and verdure. Two or three trees reared their heads skyward, faintly suggesting the "forest primeval" to the city denizens. Then he looked across to a window exactly opposite to his, where a lady sat sewing. He had watched her every day since he had been a prisoner in that room. She plied her needle all day, with only short intervals of absence from her room, and must accomplish a good deal, he thought, her fingers flew so rapidly. She was not near enough for him to discern her features, but there was something in her air and attitude as she sat at work that interested him and made him like to watch her. He could perceive that she was not posing for his benefit, although she must be aware that he looked a good deal in her direction. She was tall and graceful, he could see when she arose to walk, and there was a certain self-possession and absence of flurry in her movements that made him feel it would be a relief to his tired soul to have such a woman near him.

"Sewing! eternally sewing!" he muttered. "I wonder woman don't get tired to death of such monotonous, confusing work! I suppose they do. Probably she has to earn her living in that way. I wonder if she is a widow?" He had a horror of widows. "Probably not, or she would have tried to scrape acquaintance before this time. I wish I could have just such a neat-looking woman for housekeeper. But, perhaps, distance lends enchantment. I've a mind to go round to see her when I get well. That house is—let me see—the same number as this, for those streets are numbered just alike. But then I should not know who to ask for. It would be rather awkward to ask for the lady who sits sewing by the window up two flights, for it's a lodging-house, where folks are not supposed to know each other's business. I guess she is alone in the world, for she don't seem to have many callers; so there would be no use to talk about her," he thought spitefully, remembering how Dora Robinson, a spinster of forty-five, had refused to come and keep house for him, a man of twenty-eight, for fear people would talk. "No one would be fool enough to accuse me of designs on that ancient female," he thought, ungallantly. "I shouldn't think of meddling with my grandmother." The idea of getting this quiet, lady-like person across the yards to keep house for him, seemed to possess him. "I should think she might prefer it to that everlasting sewing. I wish I could call across and ask her. Hang conventionalities! It's a deuced bore when a man is in my position."

A sudden gust of summer wind, bearing on its wings the odor of flowers, swept through the yards, causing blinds to close with a quick clatter, stirring the grape-vines smartly and causing a small commotion among the foliage of the trees. "Quite a little whirlwind," he thought, and at that moment he saw a scrap of something white sail quickly out of her window and whirl fantastically over the yard. It meandered a few moments gracefully, then, like a carrier dove with a message, it flew straight across to his window, paused a moment in front of it, and then fluttered into his face. It was a bit of soft, costly, delicate lace. "It belongs to her work," he thought. "I wonder if she saw where it came! He looked across to her window. Her head was turned in his direction. He held up the lace, of which there was about half a yard.

She nodded with a smile that showed her pearly teeth. "Wonder if they are her own," he thought. He saw her get up and put on her hat and shawl. "She is coming," he thought. "This is too valuable to lose." Before long he heard the bell ring, and the girl come to tell him that a lady at the door wanted something, she could not tell what. She understood her to say something about a bit of lace.

"Show her up," he said, and in a few moments the lady he had so much desired to see closer stood in the room. She had a bright, good natured, practical face; just the face he should suppose would be associated with her movements. She was past her first youth, was probably thirty-five. He politely asked her to be seated.

"I called for my lace, which the wind was ill-natured enough to carry off," she said with a frank smile.

"Which I am happy to return to you," he said as he passed it to her.

"It is a small piece," she said, "but it is quite expensive. It belongs to another person, and if I lost it I should have to replace it."

She made a movement to go.

"Please do not hurry," he said; "you see I am an invalid, and your coming in is a break in the monotony."

She glanced at him and at the crutches sympathizingly.

"I have been watching you sewing every day," he went on. "Don't you get tired of it?"

"Yes, sometimes; but everything grows tiresome after awhile."

"Wouldn't you like better to be a housekeeper?" he said abruptly.

She looked at him in surprise and half suspicion, and he hastened to explain the situation in which he was placed.

"I want some one neat and capable to take charge of my house," he finished; "won't you accept the situation?"

"Why do you suspect that I am neat and capable?" she asked, a good deal surprised at the, to her, premature proposal.

"I don't know, only that I have been watching your movements for weeks," he told her, "and I believe you would be the right one in the right place, if you would only accept the control over the house. You can ascertain my standing by inquiry at the firm of Bent & Knight. Will you come?"

"Don't you want a recommendation?" she asked with a smile.

"No; your face and manner are recommendation enough."

"I have no one to consult but myself. I will come."

"How soon?" he asked, while his face lighted up with a smile of relief.

"In—let me see—this is Thursday. I will come on Monday."

"Very well. We will try to exist until then. I feel sure you will make a change in this house." He had seen her quick eye taking in the general disorder, the littered carpet, the table strewn with odds and ends of almost anything. Just then poor, neglected little Mable pushed open the door, singing a little song she had heard in her childish fashion. She was a sunny-tempered little creature. The lady glanced at her quickly.

"This is your little girl you spoke of," she said; "come here and let me see you."

The child stepped to her timidly.

"She is suffering for care," he said, thankful, however, that he had given orders to have her face washed. "Does she look altogether hopeless?"

"Not at all," the lady returned, in her practical, pleasant way, as she patted the curly head. "I think she is a nice little girl."

"By what name shall I call you?" he asked, as she arose to go.

"Mrs. Iddings. And yours is Addison," she said. "I got my information from the door-plate," she added.

"Mrs. Iddings," he mused, when she had left; "a widow, I suppose; but with that face not a designing one."

The next week the reign of Mrs. Iddings as a housekeeper commenced. The slipshod girl was dismissed, and from some quarter unknown to Mr. Addison a neat, active girl was procured. Then the whole house underwent a thorough renovation. Such cleaning of paint, and sweeping, and dusting, and polishing. Mrs. Iddings took the lead; she was not afraid of work evidently, and her help seconded ably. Mabel was taken in hand, and came out prim, under the hands of Mrs. Iddings, a pretty, cleanly child, as sweet in face and tasteful in dress as she was in temper, and whom her father delighted to kiss and fondle. And then the cooking. Surely never had he eaten such appetizing dishes as his new housekeeper set before him. He convalesced rapidly, and in a short time was able to be down town once more. "She's a jewel of a woman," he told his friends, with extreme satisfaction, always relating the circumstances that sent her there. "That was a blessed wind that wafted that bit of lace to me."

"You'll be falling in love with her," suggested Frank Peabody, a bachelor of forty.

"Not at all. Nothing sentimental about her; at least, nothing I can discover, but a fine, sensible, practical woman."

And when she had got the domestic machinery running smoothly, Mrs. Iddings sat down one day and wrote this note:

DEAR MARION—Come and see me at 61 —— street. Come prepared to stay a week. Surprised at my change? Well, come and we will talk it over. I am housekeeper for a widower, and it came about in the funniest way. I can't write you about it, but come as soon as you can.

And the next evening, a few minutes after he returned from his business, Mr. Addison, passing through the hall, answered the door bell, which rang just then. A lady stood there when he opened the door, who asked for Mrs. Iddings. The sound of the voice struck some answering chord in his heart, but the lady wore a veil, and it was growing dusk, so that he could not distinguish her features.

"Please step in here and I will call her," he said, opening the door of the parlor. She walked in. He stopped to light the gas. As it flashed out brightly the two looked into each other's face. "Marion!" "Burke! I did not know I was coming to your house," she faltered. She looked graver than of old, but to his eyes was still the same sweet Marion.

"And I did not know you were within a thousand miles of me," he exclaimed; "but I meant to search for you soon."

The two were forgetting the existence of Mrs. Iddings, but she, passing through the hall, heard her friend's voice, and was much surprised to find that Mr. Addison and she were old acquaintances. She and Marion had been friends for a year, but the latter had never let her into the sad secret of her life. She had remained unmarried all these years, and had drifted to the city where he was, but had not known of his whereabouts or his wife's death. Mrs. Iddings was duly acquainted with her story, and was much pleased that she had been the means of bringing together the long separated lovers. Of course, in due time they were married. And Burke was seized with a desire for matchmaking, and introduced Frank Peabody to Mrs. Iddings, bring him home to her one evening before she left. And the upshot was that she agreed to become Frank's housekeeper for life. And Burke is happy now, and thinks that the breeze that blew the bit of lace to him must have come straight from the gates of heaven.

SUBSTITUTE FOR ICE-CHEST AND CELLAR.—There are women who have neither of the above commodities, and who forever complain of sour milk and melted butter. As I belong to that class, and am not troubled that way, I can recommend the simple and the efficient way in which I avoid both evils. It is an old remedy, but as good as when it was new. Put your butter in a glass or ironstone china dish (no objection to sevres or china, if you have it, but avoid wood and metal), having a cover—one which projects is best; set this in a shallow earthen dish half or one-third full of water, to which a tablespoonful of salt has been added; cover the butter dish with a clean, thick, coarse towel previously wet with cold water, and let the ends of the towl hang into the water in the earthern dish. Be sure and have the towl in the water all around the butter dish, and not only here and there. Now set your dish in as cool a place as you have—in a draught, if possible. Change the water in the lower dish every day or every other day, not forgetting the salt, and be sure to keep the cloth on all the time, never leaving it off on any account, if you value the firmness of your butter. The latter will not be as hard as when kept in the ice-chest, but it will be quite firm enough to spread nicely. Milk can be kept in the same manner, substituting a pitcher or jar for the dish, but there is one difficulty about milk which is sometimes hard to overcome. It has has been found that jarring and shaking has as much tendency to sour or turn milk as mere heat, and the only remedy in this case is to place your milk on terra firma, as every footstep, every passing vehicle which shakes your building agitates the milk as well. I do not know if suspension from a ceiling would overcome the difficulty, but perhaps the idea is worth testing.

HIS MIND WANDERS.—"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." It is, it is. And when we reflect that when Solomon wrote that he was the richest man in the world, and carried enough money loose in his pockets to pay the national debt, and silver "was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon," and he wouldn't sit upon, ride in, or eat or drink from anything but pure gold, and was rising a family of the worst boys that ever troubled Israel, we—but this is not the sermon department of this paper, what we were thinking of was that—perhaps we don't make it very clear, but Solomon's head was level, after all. That may not be what we started out to say, but it is a great deal better.—[Burlington Hawkeye.

SALT THE OLD PASTURES.—A few years since I had an old pasture that had almost run out, covered with weeds and patched with moss. I mixed a few barrels of salt and wood ashes and applied about two barrels of the mixture per acre, covering about half the lot. The result surprised me. Before fall the moss had nearly disappeared, and the weeds were rapidly following suit, while the grass came in thick, assuming a dark green color, and made fine pasturage. The balance of the lot remained unproductive as before, but the following year was salted with like results.—[Correspondent Country Gentleman.

Darkness and Light.

"Leave the house instantly! You are no son of mine from this time. I will not harbor one who has degraded himself, and disappointed me."

Hard words were those to hear from the lips of any one, still harder from those of a father.

Mr. John Phillips was a proud man—proud of himself, of his family, of the reputation he had acquired for honesty and upright dealing, and of the notice he received from people who were just a step farther up the ladder of fortune than himself. To increase his wealth and consequence, he had ground down his family to the most pitiful and pinching straits in private, to atone for expenditures to meet the public gaze with a show of riches that honestly belonged to his wife and children.

His eldest boy was placed in a store where there were many other clerks. Young Phillips' scanty clothing, his evident destitution of money, even to withholding a penny from a poor child when others gave freely, accorded ill with the reports of his father's wealth; and the lads sometimes touched the sorest place in Samuel Phillips' heart by reproaching him for sordidness.

One day—a cold, wintry day—a little girl, shivering and pale, came into the store. Her wan, blue look touched his heart with pity. How could he send her away? He thrust two glittering half dollars into her hand, and bade her go and buy some wood. The money, he thought, could be replaced; but he was watched by another lad who was glad of an opportunity to degrade him, and when the cash sales were made up that night, young Carroll reported that the missing dollar had been taken by Samuel Phillips.

The boy's blushes and confusion as he tried to make an honest statement of the case, were taken for guilt; and a note to his father, which he was bound to take home from his employer, distinctly told that Mr. Sampson no longer wished to employ a person in his store who had been guilty of the crime of stealing.

In his first passion Mr. Phillips had uttered the above words to his son. In vain the poor boy pleaded why he did it. Perhaps the excuse embodied more sin in his father's eyes than the deed itself. To give a dollar to beggar! What an enormity! And then, that John Phillip's son should so outrage his father's good name! The man's pride was stronger than the parent's affection. Samuel took him at his word; and that very night, in the cold and darkness, the boy set off, taking his first step into the unknown future of his life.

Had his father but believed him, pointed out what was wrong in his act, and forgiven him, his son might never have sinned again. His pride and cruelty sent him forth, a wanderer, distrusting all, and holding in his heart a root of bitterness which might turn his whole life to gall.

When the family was aroused to the conviction, the next morning, that Samuel Phillips was actually gone, Mr. Phillips tried to sooth the distressed mother with the thought that he had only disappeared for a time and would soon be with them again, glad enough to return and ask pardon for his conduct. He did not tell her with what wild and unfeeling words he had been driven away.

Years passed away. No tidings came of the fugitive. The mother, yearning for her boy, drooped and died; and the only remaining son was soon afterwards drowned. Two daughters married and went away, and Mr. Phillips was left alone. It was not possible that conscience did not sometimes bring back the image of the poor boy, as he stood that night trembling under the weight of his first crime. A crime, too, committed under the influence of the best feelings, and with the full intention of repairing the wrong. But pride kept up his indignation toward his son; and instead he only pitied himself for not being able to keep up the family name.

At last there came a day when even Mr. Phillips' proud spirit was crushed. More than the loss of wife and children, did this trial bow him to the earth. Loss after loss had come to him in his business, till at length he was obliged to give up all into the hands of his creditors. He surrendered everything—house, and household goods, not even taking the benefit which the law allowed him. Yet there were not wanting some among the injured, who openly asserted their belief that Mr. Phillips had actually saved money by the operation, and even cited his utter relinquishment of all valuable property as a visible proof that he was amply remunerated by that which was not seen.

His friends forsook him; dropping off one by one, unable to vouch for his innocence. His health failed, and even if it had not he could not have witnessed the public sale of his household treasures which was now announced.

He had tortured himself by throwing into his creditors' hands even little trifling mementoes of the past—literally leaving everything in his house, save his clothing and his private desk, which, whatever others thought, contained little but family letters, and the miniature of a little child, with a curl of golden hair at the back of the locket. That child! Oh, if he could but recall the past! If he had but spoken kindly and forgivingly that child might now have been near to save him from disgrace.

There was, as we have said, a public sale. It comprised the store and household goods, and included a valuable horse which Mrs. Phillips' failing health induced him to buy, and which he would not part with after her death. The man had a tender spot in his heart, after all. When the man who had been his clerk came into his solitary room at a boarding house, the night after the sale, his first question was:

"Who bought Fleetfoot?"

"I did not know the man, sir. He was a stranger. There were many strangers there, and I did not ask the name of him who purchased the horse. He was in the house a good part of the time, and I noticed that he bid for a number of things."

"I hope Fleetfoot has a kind master," observed Mr. Phillips.

The clerk was going, but returned, after a short parley with some one at the door.

"Here's a man, sir, who wishes you to meet him at the house you occupied, at half-past nine o'clock this evening."

"What can any one want with me there?" asked Mr. Phillips.

"I cannot tell, sir. I did not know the man, but from the glance I had of him at the door, I should say it was the man who was bidding on the house when I came away, and the same who bought Fleetfoot."

"I must go, I suppose; yet, if he is a gentleman, I should hardly think he would expose me to the pain of going there."

Mr. Phillips walked to his old home with trembling steps. He looked old and feeble, like a man who had numbered twice his years. He reached the door that once opened to his familiar touch and rang the bell. The woman who had so long kept his house opened it, and ushered him into the sitting room, from which years ago, she had ordered his boy from his sight forever.

This thought flashed into his mind, and was more vivid from the circumstances of his own armchair being removed out its ordinary place, and a low chair just in front of it, on which Samuel had leaned in passionate weeping. The boy, in his misery, on that night, had left his cap hanging on the corner of that low chair, and, as if to deepen the father's anguish to-night, a boy's cap hung there again. How well he remembered it! He shook with the memories that rose in his mind! His tearful eyes scarcely took in the figure of a noble gentlemen who now entered the room, and desired him to walk around the house. Every piece of furniture was in its old place. In his own chamber, the little arrangements of the dressing table were precisely as they always were; and in a little bedroom beside it were the two small beds in which his boys used to sleep.

He looked up at his conductor through his fast-falling tears. Something in his face, in the stranger's black, flashing eyes, that went to his heart. They had returned from the sitting room, and the stranger held his hand with a warm, loving grasp. He heard the words, "This is all yours, dear father!" and then the two men sank together upon their knees while the younger breathed out a fervent thanksgiving that he had been spared to comfort and console his father in his hour of adverse fortune

Stung with his father's cruel words, Samuel Phillips had deserted his home, and driven almost to desperation, had wandered away from the place that knew him, to a far city. Providence raised up friends to the desolate boy. He found himself trusted, honored and respected; and at the death of one who had been as a father to him, he became wealthy. He saw the notice of the sale in a newspaper—hurried on to prevent it and arrived only when it had already commenced. He had heard of his mother's death, and from that time resolved never to return. But when he found that his father was in real distress, all was forgotten, save the thought that he might be in time to save him from open disgrace or actual want. Everything had fallen into his hands, for the bystanders saw that he was determined to possess all, and they gave way to his evident desire and ability to gratify it.

The reconciliation was complete. The pride of the father was subdued. Reinstated in his old home, his liabilities all met, and his business re-established by the son whom he had banished, his heart had melted to child-like humility that was indeed touching to behold.

Edwin Forrest's Stinginess.

Edwin Forrest was a fearfully stingy and close man. At one Boston engagement his share of the receipts was $4000. Though the management had lost money on it, he exacted the last penny. The money was handed over to him, a few odd dollars being in rolls of twenty five cent pieces, and he left the box-office. Half an hour afterwards he returned to the office with one of these rolls, and taking a piece of silver from it, said to the treasurer, in his own peculiarly pompous manner:

"This quarter, sir, which you gave me is not good."

"What's the matter with it?" asked the treasurer, curtly.

"It has worn smooth, sir, and the people at the bank refuse to take it."

The treasurer, who was a good deal of a wag, handed Mr. Forrest a bright new quarter, took the worn piece, and with the words, "I wouldn't sell these two shillings for five dollars," slipped it into his pocket. That night the story of Forrest and the smooth quarter was known all over Boston.

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