Current Literature.

MORE IN THE MAN THAN IN THE LAND

BY SIDNEY LANIER.

I knowed a man, which he lived in Jones,
Which Jones is a county of red hills and stones,
And he lived pretty much by gettin' of loans,
And his mules were nuthin' but skin and bones,
And his hogs was flat as his cornbread pones,
And he had bout a thousand acres o' land.

This man—which his name it was also Jones—
He swore that he'd have them old red hills and stones
For he could make nuthin' off'n them, sho'—
[illegible]
And he rar and he waved his [illegible]
And he hollered to Tom [illegible]
For to git a wagon and git him a load
And to git, in racin' order, fast as he could,
An' a wash'ther tons out thar to Texas.

So him and Tom they hitched up the mules,
Perticlar that Luke was mighty ugly 'bout
That 'll stay in Georgy ther' till he's [illegible]
Ever'body alsoe' wh'n all [illegible]
Git passed in Texas where gittin' won't git out
By the time [illegible] and slaughtin the land.

And he drive by a house where a [illegible] Brown
Was a livin' not far from the edge of town,
And he bantered Brown for to buy his place
And said that bein' as money was skace,
And him as sheriff was hard o' face,
Two dollars an acre would buy the land.

They closed at a dollar and fifty cents,
And Jones he bought him a wagon and tents,
And I aided his corn, and his winmin' and truck,
And moved to Texas, which it took
His entire pile, with the best of luck,
To git thar and git him a little land.

But Brown moved out on the old Jones farm,
And he rolled up his breeches and bared his arm,
And he picked all the rocks from off'n the groun',
And he rooted it up and plowed it down
Then he plowed his corn and his wheat in the land.

Five years glid by, and Brown, one day,
He'd got so fat that he wouldn't weigh,
Was a sittin' down, sorter lazily,
To the bullest dinner you ever see,
When one of the children jumped on his knee,
And says, "yan's Jones, which you bought his land."

And thar was Jones, standin' out at the fence,
And he hadn't no wagon, nor mules, nor tents
For he had left Texas afoot and cam
To Georgy to see if he couldn't git sum
Employment, and he was looking as humble as of
He had never owned any land.

But Brown he axed him in, and he set,
Him down to his vittles smokin' hot,
And when he had filled his self and the floor,
Brown looked at him sharp an' long and swore
That "whether men's land was rich or poor
Thar was more in the man than there was in the land."

THE OTHER FARMER JONES.

BY SIDNEY HERBERT.

I know a man, and his name it is Jones
Who lives in a town that is full of drones,
Too lazy to "keep the skin on their bones,"
For their land is covered with stubble and stones,
And they call it Stubbletown.

Yet it can be said of this man named Jones,
"His table" with all farm "luxuries groans,"
And he is always prepared to make loans,
While he drives a pair of the finest roans
Through the streets of Stubbletown.

You wonder success came to this man Jones,
With land once covered with stubble and stones,
And whose near neighbors were lazy as drones
And could survive in either of the zones—
Those farmers of Stubbletown.

I'll tell you how wealth came to this man Jones:
He turnt up stubble and picked up stones,
And in his household he would have no drones
But made all his children develop their bones
By hard work in Stubbletown.

Wake up, slothful farmers, and be like Jones,
Don't waste your time in grunts and groans;
Turn up the stubble and pick up the stones,
Raise your own hogs, your mules and your roans,
Right there in old Stubbletown.

The Squire's Confession.

BY KATE SUMNER GATES.

There could hardly have been a greater contrast between two persons than there was between Squire Gaylord and Luke Watson. Even a casual glance at the Squire's portly form would assure you that he had been successful in life. Indeed, he had long enjoyed an uninterrupted prosperity, that he was coming to look upon less successful men as, to a certain extent, culpably responsible for their misfortunes. But while, without doubt, one could discern prosperity in Squire Gaylord, there was no possibility of mistaking the fact that Luke Watson, standing there in the Squire's office before him, was the victim of disappointment and adversity.

There was something pitiful about the man as he stood there chafing his hands and vainly trying to wrap his threadbare coat more closely about him, his very attitude expressing weakness not only of the body but also of will, and wretchedness of mind—he who should have been erect in the pride of his manhood.

It was hard to tell just wherein lay the difference between these two men. Luke had worked hard, harder than the Squire had thought of doing, but he had been unfortunate in all that he had undertaken.

"Luke means well enough," said Pete Granger, as the little group of loafers discussed his affairs in the village store "I suppose a man in town means better, works harder than Luke, but he hasn't got no knack for anything. He's trading horses and remembers those of the animile has got two eyes he forgets to notice if she goes on three feet or four. He's forever about everything. Some folks now days has a knack and always get along. Take the Squire there, and there are some folks here, like Luke. But I'd rather, I'd positively rather be Luke at the day judgment than Squire Gaylord. He's a Christian? Well, yis, mebbe he is that is, he's a church member in good and regular standing, as they call it, but he ain't what I call a Christ-like sort of man, not by no manner of means; and if I understand it that's those kind of people are aimin' to be. If he forecloses on Luke now, the parson nor nobody else needn't try to convert me. I don't want nothing to do with a religion that don't show mercy."

"I believe that you wished to see me," said Luke, hesitatingly. He knew only too well for what purpose he had been called, but he desired to postpone the dreaded blow, if only for a few moments. "I did," replied the Squire, briefly. "It is the 25th, as you may be aware, and your mortgage falls due. Can you pay it not?" The Squire never minced matters; what he had to say he said. The man before him shivered as with the ague. "I—hoped—perhaps—I thought—I've been very unfortunate."

"Then you cannot make your payments?" interrupted the Squire. Desperation gave Luke a courage foreign to his nature; he suddenly stood erect and looked the Squire full in the face.

"No, Squire Gaylord, you know perfectly well that I cannot make my payments. You know that I have had sickness in my family, and was laid up myself for three months. You know that soon after I was able to go to work again the hands were cut down, and finally the factory shut down entirely. I've done the best I could to get along, but how much do you suppose I could lay up under those circumstances. Foreclose if you will, and turn us out, you can. My wife is sick in bed and it may kill her, but what is that to you? Only it is to be hoped for your sake, that the Lord will have more mercy upon you than you have ever shown your fellow men." Luke's courage, born on the impulse of the moment, suddenly deserted him, and cowering back into his accustomed self he turned and left the Squire's office.

A more thoroughly surprised and startled man it would be hard to find than the Squire when left to himself. He, Squire Gaylord, to be assailed in that manner; he, a pillar of the church! Had it not been the boast of his life that not one penny of his was dishonestly earned, never once had he taken a single cent more for anything than he thought it was worth, and yet—the prayer learned at his mother's knee came suddenly to his mind, brought there by Luke's closing words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." What if the Lord was as strictly just and merciless in his forgiveness of the trespasses of his fellow-men against him. The question was not a pleasant one, and taking his hat, the Squire followed Luke out of the office into the street. It was not long before Dr. Kent drove up and alighted. "Fine day, Squire," he said, pausing for an instant at his own door. "One cannot help feeling better such days, though I met Luke Watson just now looking as thoroughly woebegone as a man could. Poor fellow, he has had a tough time of it. I wish that it was in my power to help him, for I think that he has always had to labor under disadvantages, and I don't wonder that he's lost heart; he looked really desperate when I met him just now." The doctor passed on, and the Squire went back to his office.

Half an hour later Mr. Edmunds dropped in on business. "By the way," he said, as he rose to go, "isn't Watson's time on that mortgage about up?" "Yes," was the brief reply. "You won't foreclose, will you?" "Why not? He has already had an extension of time, and he cannot pay, and there is nothing to indicate that he ever can."

"But—I really do not see what will become of his family if they lose their home. Somehow I have an idea Luke might be quite a man, even now if he could get on his feet again. He hasn't a grain of business capability, I know, but I fancy he's quite a mechanical genius."

"Well, I do not know what I've got to do about it; he should not have gone into business if he was not capable of carrying it on," answered Squire testily. "I am not to blame because he has made a failure by trying to do what he could not."

"No, no—I suppose not; only it seems hard to turn a helpless unfortunate out of his home when you've plenty of your own, and some to spare, I fancied you might rather believe in [illegible] doing your brother a service, and leaving the much to God." "Pshaw!" laughed the Squire. "I really can not see that you are professing Christian, and so very different from the rest of us. Believe me from a Christian spirit, if this is a fair sample," thought Mr. Edmunds to himself as he went his way, leaving the Squire to his own meditations.

Very troubled and uneasy they were. Why should everybody speak so to him about Luke? He had warned him to start with, that he would probably lose the place; he had given him plenty of time to pay, if he could not now he never could—unless he could start somewhere in something better adapted to him than anything here. But why should he wait any longer? Of course it would not be any very great loss to him to give up the place, but why was he called upon to do this for Luke Watson? And intermingled with these thoughts were other questionings. Suppose that he, Squire Gaylord, should find mercy and forgiveness in that last day only in the same proportion as he had shown it? He went home early that night. On his way he stopped for the mail. Pete Granger, as usual, was loafing on the steps. Dr. Deane, the Squire's pastor, was speaking a word or two with him. "I'll think about it, parson," he heard Pete say as he passed. "I'll think about it when some of your church members set a bright and shining example."

There was a sneer in Pete's voice, and the Squire felt instinctively that it was meant for him. That night at family prayers the Squire hesitated, and his voice faltered as he read the words: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." He had been strictly honest, he had given largely to benevolent objects, he was the mainstay of the church, pecuniarily, at least, but did his life lead others to glorify God? Or, instead, did it bring a reproach upon that name? These were new questions for the Squire to ask, but underneath his pride, his covetousness, his coldness and self-righteousness was a real germ of love for the Saviour that was struggling now to work its way into life. He had been prospered in all that he had undertaken, he was known far and near as a shrewd, clear-headed business man; he took pride in the knowledge that such was his reputation. To-night it occurred to him for the first time in his life to question if these capabilities upon which he so prided himself were not God-given. Out of the abundance of prosperity which he had received, should he give or withhold to a weaker brother? It was a bitter contest, and the morning still found it waging.

"I'll run down to the city," he said to himself. "Maybe I will see or hear something that will put this miserable affair out of my mind." But never was Squire Gaylord more mistaken than in imagining that he could evade or escape from the hand of the Lord. One of the very first persons he met in the city was his old chum Joe Gleason. "I say, Richard, I want a good man for the mill; one that's got some mechanical genius, you know, to look after the machines. You don't happen to know of any such person, do you?" "I fancy he's quite a mechanical genius." Mr. Edmunds' words flashed through the Squire's mind, and with them a suggestion—what if he should give Luke an extension and recommend him.

"I don't know, Joe; maybe, perhaps, I could find one. Would you wait a day or two?" "Certainly, if you think there is a chance, but let me know by Thursday."

The Squire's stay in the city was short; he felt that he had a battle to fight with himself. This question concerning Luke would affect his whole future life, how should he decide it? Could he conquer his pride and tacitly confess himself in the wrong by showing mercy—should he in helping bear Luke's burdens become a burden bearer? "It is a fearful thing to be the means of another's going astray." Squire Gaylord half turned in his seat as the words fell on his ear. Could the speaker mean them for him? No, of course not, and yet how they answered his thoughts.

It was truly a fearful thing to lead others astray, to be a stumbling-block in others' pathway, and every moment it was becoming more and more clearly impressed upon the Squire's mind that was just what he had been doing, he who had gloried in his uprightness. It was Thursday evening, the evening of the prayer and conference meeting in Benton. Squire Gaylord came in late, and those who sat near him observed that his face was haggard and worn, as though he had passed through some unwonted ordeal; but the expression of his countenance was peaceful, the conflict was over, and the victory was his. Then came a little pause, and he arose to his feet. "My brethren," he said, and his voice was husky, "I have a confession to make to you. I have been in and out among you these many years as a professing Christian, and in my blind self-confidence I have thought myself a follower of Christ. But God has mercifully opened my eyes. He has shown me myself, and then revealed to me the loving, compassionate and merciful Savior. I desire now to be like him; brethren pray for me."

The group gathered in the post-office the next night was unusually large; Dr. Kent came in, and Pete Granger accosted him. "I say, doctor, what has the Squire done for Luke?" "Given him his place free of claim, and put him in the way of getting the best situation he ever had," replied the doctor briefly. "It is Luke's own fault now if he does not get on well."

There was a moment's hush, then Pete turned to the assembled group and said, "I've never perticlarly believed in religion, as you folks know, I've thought that folks as was good was good, and them as wasn't, they wasn't, but when a man like Squire Gaylord goes agin his very nature, then it proves that there's a something beyond us. Mebbe it would be well for us to look into it some." "How is it with you Edmunds?" asked the doctor, as they walked up the street together. "You have often said that you would look into the matter if ever you saw a radical change in any one. You do not doubt the change in the Squire, do you?" "I could not if I would. I think that I have been somewhat of Pete's opinion that followed their natural dispositions pretty muchly, but this certainly is a deviation." "Then will you not abide by your oft-repeated words, and look into the matter. Won't you come on Christ's side?"

It was not until he reached his own gate that Mr. Edmunds replied. "The question is as well decided now as any time, I suppose," he said. "It has followed me all the day long and God helping me henceforth I will be his. But, like the Squire, doctor, I say with all my heart, pray for me."—Examiner.

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