

# THE MINISTER'S WIFE

(CONCLUDED.)

It was not the reputation of the Rev. Silas Ormsby that drew so large an attendance at the little church on the next Sabbath. Curiosity led most of those who wore bonnets and crinolines thither, and it was gratified to the utmost, for in his very first prayer the old gentleman uttered a devout and earnest supplication for the pastor of the congregation, who at that very moment, perhaps, took unto himself the solemn obligation of married life. Might Heaven give him strength, and bless him and his young and pious wife, etc. It was a prayer worth listening to, but the ladies of Appleblow heard nothing after the word wife. They were lost in astonishment; and hurried out of church, after the benediction, with indecent haste, to discuss the affair by their own firesides. And on Monday, when it was known by all that black Betty, the charwoman of the place, was engaged to scrub and scour the parsonage; that an ingrain carpet had been sent down from New York for the parlor floor, and that a tea-set had arrived in a box, marked "this side up, with care," the certainty of the astonishing fact became established, and Appleblow joined in denouncing Mr. Redlaw as a despicable flirt. "And," said the plump mamma of the nine scraggy Misses Fish, "of all men, a minister should blush to earn such a reputation. Nobody would believe the attention he has paid my girls. I couldn't tell which one of 'em he wanted, he was so particular to all of 'em."

Other mammas said much the same, and during the afternoon a procession of "help" might have been seen on the road leading to the cottage, carrying white paper parcels containing principally small volumes—"Practical Piety," "Baxter's Saint's Rest," tracts and hymn-books, presents from Walter Redlaw to the sisters of his flock, now returned with indignation. The excitement lasted all the week, and was still strong on the next Sabbath when the minister walked up the church aisle with a beautiful girl upon his arm, and the Appleblow girls looked upon a face so exquisite that none of them could resort to the usual course of declaring her "not the least good-looking."

They were decorous and prudent in Appleblow, and all the forms of courtesy were gone through with. The new minister's wife was invited out to tea, was called upon by the ladies of her flock, and was favored with a donation party; nevertheless, there was little cordial feeling in Appleblow. The ladies did not take kindly to their pastor's wife and soon the clouds began to gather. At first, in secret whispers, Mrs. Redlaw's bonnet was too gay, she was frivolous, not a good housekeeper, not zealous in good works. By-and-by louder, more serious fault-finding, not only with the minister's wife, but with the minister himself.

The women began it; the men were talked over by their wives; finally the first step was taken. "Squire Gorse and his family gave up their pew, and found themselves more edified by the Baptist clergyman in the next village; others followed their example. The fault-finding and slander reached the parsonage itself and little Rosa Redlaw, with her head upon her husband's shoulder, sobbed: "What shall I do, Walter? I meant to help you, and to make them all like me, and you see how it is."

And the young clergyman soothed his weeping wife and bade her have good cheer, for matters would mend, and all would be right again. He was mistaken; matters did not mend; they grew worse and worse; and, a year from the date of his marriage, came to a climax. A bevy of trustees waited upon him in his study, and bemoaned their wrongs. They paid a large salary; they expected the pastor to do his part, and he lost them money—absolutely had emptied the church, instead of filling it. Besides, his wife should have been instructed in her duty. She had made herself generally disliked; if the minister's wife was not popular, it was a very unpleasant thing. Could he explain?

Of course the visit ended as they expected; there was but one consummation possible; Appleblow knew, in a day or so, that their pastor was about to leave the place forever.

The winter had set in—an unhealthy winter, warm and moist, instead of cold and bracing. Rumors of prevailing ill health spread over Appleblow, and the minister packing his books in his study, came to hear of them. They grew louder. Whole families of children sickened and lay low, and a dread cry arose—"It is the smallpox!"

One day Walter Redlaw left his home to perform the burial service over the graves of three children of one family. The next their mother called him to the bedside of her husband, to see him also die. And with these deaths, the horrors of that time, never to be forgotten by any who dwell there, then began in earnest.

Men, women, and children sickened with the loathsome pestilence. Horrors seized those yet unsmitten, and they fled. Appleblow became a great lazaretto, and Walter Redlaw said to his young wife: "Let us go quickly, dear one, before the scourge falls upon our household."

But she, as she spoke, left her seat, and knelt before him, resting her head upon his breast, as he still sat before their evening fire, in a child-like fashion, all her own, and as she sheltered her upon his bosom, whispered: "My husband, do not bid me go, for I must stay here and do all I can—watch with them, nurse them, strive to comfort the bereaved. I should indeed be all they

think of me, if I, their pastor's wife, died at such an hour."

The man listened at first unconvinced. "We owe them nothing," he said; "they have used us shamefully. Remember, I am actually their pastor no longer."

But his wife gently pleaded; pleaded to stay amidst the danger, to aid him in the duties which would fall to him amidst the sick and dying; and, touching his heart and soul by her sweet Christian spirit, brought him at last to say: "You shall have it as you choose, Rosa; we will stay amidst this hard, heathened-hearted people in their hour of trial; but, God sparing us, we will leave them when it is over, and go elsewhere."

And Rosa Redlaw rejoiced and thanked him. But by-and-by a natural womanly dread came into her heart, and she looked at him with tears in her dark eyes. "Walter," she whispered, blushing as she spoke, "you have often called me beautiful. Should I lose that beauty, could you love me still? Should this pestilence, falling upon me, scar and mar my face, would I be as dear to you? Speak truly, darling."

But he had no need to speak, for she read the constancy and purity of his love in the one long look he gave her, and sobbed upon his shoulder—"Nay, then, I shall have no fear."

At dawn the two went forth upon their mission.

In their selfish horror, kinsfolk fled from each other. Sisters shrank from those who had been nursed at the same breast, children deserted their parents, friends grew brutal to each other; but those two young creatures never swerved from their appointed task; like ministering angels, they went from house to house, aiding the over-taxed physician, supporting the mother's falling courage, coming to the lonely and deserted in their greatest need. Sometimes they were together, but more frequently apart, there was so much to do. When they could, they met at night in the old parsonage; but often dying couches or sick beds, where lives hung in the balance, kept them separated for several days. But their hearts and prayers followed each other always.

It was a trying time, but they were very brave and faithful. Some of those who had been most cruel to Rosa Redlaw were her patients now, and lay helpless as infants while she fanned the flickering flame of life within their bosoms.

When, save for her, no friend had watched beside the couch of loathsome disease; when in the death-room, pestilence-haunted, she sat all night and watched; when her own hands robbed the dead infant for its last sleep, and it was known to all what mission she had taken upon herself, wonder filled the village, and in a little while there arose to Heaven so many prayers for Rosa Redlaw and her husband that, had the Mohammedan belief been true, they need have had no dread of the "burning path," it must have been paved so thickly.

And in time, though that day was slow in coming, the pestilence began to abate, and health came to Appleblow again, with the sharp frosts and keen cold air of the Christmas time. On Christmas day joy-bells were rung from the steeples in Appleblow, to tell the people that the rod was lifted.

But before night sad news ran through the village. She who had watched with them, who had been so tender and so faithful, who had passed through those fearful scenes when the pestilence was at its worst, as though she wore a charmed life, was smitten, now that she was no longer needed.

The shutters of the parsonage were closed, the windows darkened, silence as of death reigned throughout its rooms, for the angel of the house lay trembling on the margin of the grave. Another pastor preached this Sabbath in Appleblow, and all knew well why he was there. Walter Redlaw watched beside his darling's bed, and never left it day or night.

Penitential tears fell in Appleblow that Sabbath; prayers went up to Heaven for the pastor's fair young wife, and the angels heard them, and heard also those of the young husband, and bore them through the gates of Heaven, and sang them to celestial music at the foot of the Throne, telling how good she was, and how true, and so fit for heaven that it were a mercy to less perfect mortals to let her stay on earth.

And the Most High listened. The death angel's wings flung their shadow on the portal of the parsonage, but did not pass it; and, pale and feeble, but with life still strong in her young breast, for she clung to her husband with all a woman's earnestness, and loved earth for his sake, Rosa Redlaw lay at last free from the burning fever, certain to live—so the old doctor said, with tears in his gray eyes.

But was she sure of her soft, child-like beauty, of her pearly skin, of her golden hair, of her bright blue eyes? God alone could tell. But Walter, bending over her, thought of the promise he had made her on the day when she entered on her task of peril and self-denial, and knew, knowing how dear she was to him, that no change in his darling's beauty could change his love.

And into the darkened room, health came, bringing balm; and the sun shone in again, and the soft air breathed through the lattice, and the birds sang in their golden cages and the housemaid in her kitchen, where she made dainty messes for the convalescing; and there came a Sabbath at last when Rosa was well enough to go to church with her husband.

Appleblow knew it, and the church was full, and out upon the grass in the

church-yard groups were gathered, girls and boys, young married couples, old folks who had seen their grand-children grow to be men and women and die. And, waiting in the morning sunlight of a pleasant winter day, they saw their pastor coming along the frost-hardened road with his wife upon his arm. They came nearer, and they saw how frail her form had grown; but still her veil was down, and they could not see her face until standing amongst them, she put it back, and then—yes, breaths were held, and all eyes riveted upon those features; and there was a hush, unbroken, until a child's voice, clear as dropping silver, arose upon the air: "Oh, mother, look! the lady is just as beautiful as ever." And then, though it was Sunday, and in New England, and beside a church, a cheer arose upon the air, and men tossed their caps on high, and women sobbed; she sobbed also, beautiful Rosa Redlaw, thanking God for all his love, and thanking Him also, as a woman must, that He had not taken from her the charms in which her husband took such tender pride, and of which, for his sake more than for her own, she was also just a little proud, though she had laid that pride aside, knowing well her danger, when she went forth upon her mission.

They never spoke against the minister's wife after that in Appleblow. Amongst them she lived and moved as might some jovial queen, and dwelt in the old parsonage, beautified as the temple of some saint might have been, until her youth changed to maturity and her maturity to age; and there you may see her yet, and her husband also, though his hair, like hers, is of frosted silver. And his grandson fills the pulpit, for Appleblow loves the race of Redlaw, and will not part with them.

# THE WEASEL AND THE WELL.

The tales found in Rabbinical literature are all illustrative of some religious idea, and are prefaced by some general proposition expressive of this principle. What follows is typical:

"The high esteem in which the faithful are held by God may be learned from an adventure with a weasel at a well." Then we find the story. A beautiful maiden of noble birth was sent to a distant town to perform a mission for her father. The road led

through an uninhabited district and through her solitary progress all the more lonely. Nervous and tired she was, and behold, a well was found by the road side. Looking down into it she saw the refreshing water so cool and dark, but there was no bucket or cup at hand. On closer inspection she found the steps cut in the side of the well by those who had dug it, and almost desperate by this time, she hastened to lower herself step by step until at last she could drink her fill.

Now that her thirst was quenched she lost the energy with which her extreme need had hurried her down, and dared not attempt to climb out again. All that she could do was to cling frantically to a jutting rock and shriek for help. Then between weeping and wailing, as she glanced upward she saw the face of a handsome young man who regarded her with a look of 'twist admiration and fear. He had been passing by and, hearing the sound of her lamentations, had sought the cause, but now he feared that this was but the devil of some demon, for the well was very deep and the maiden extremely beautiful. Finally he made her swear that she was indeed a human being, and when she had related the cause of her dilemma, the young man said that he would help her out on condition that she marry him. Forced to consent, and not altogether unwillingly, the maid was soon rescued from her perilous situation and stood by the side of her rescuer. The youth was so deeply moved by her comeliness as revealed in the full glare of the sun—that he insisted that she should go with him to be married at once.

The maiden replied to his entreaties by asking: "To what nation do you belong?"

He rejoined: "I am an Israelite, of



Here at last was her rescuer and lover

the priestly family born in the town of A.—

"I, too, am of that family," said she, "and it would certainly be subsiding in us to do ought contrary to the customs of our faith. Visit me at my own home and nothing shall prevent our marriage."

A weasel passed by at the moment of their troth plight, and the weasel and the well were agreed upon as witnesses of their mutual obligations.

Some months passed, but the young man came not to fulfill his promise and claim his bride. Still the maiden remained true to him, firmly refusing every proposal for her hand. Her friends and relatives tried to persuade her that her lover would never come, and at last her parents attempted to compel her to accept some one of her suitors. To defend herself she pretended to be seized with an epileptic fit, whenever the subject of her marriage was approached, tearing her woe-clothing and that of any bystanders who came too near to her. This cured so often that the report of her madly spread and she was soon re-

lieved from any further importunity.

The young man, however, acted quite differently. He had hardly reached home before, in the rush of business, he forgot both his sweetheart and his oath, and before very long he married some other woman. Avenging fate did not long permit this utter faithlessness to go unpunished. The first child of this marriage, a strong, handsome boy, was found slain by a weasel when only three months old. A second son enjoyed life but a little longer, when he met an untimely death by being drowned in a well.

The unhappy mother, saddened by the untoward death of her beloved children sought in vain for any of her own sins that might have brought down a curse upon her head. At last she begged her husband to tell her the story of all his career previous to their marriage. Conscience-stricken, the afflicted husband could not withstand her searching questions and finally revealed the whole secret of his broken vows. To her this accounted for all of their misfortunes, which now appeared to be only a just punishment for his unfaithfulness. She immediately sought a divorce from him, begging him as soon as he was released, to seek his former love and by the fulfilling of his vows propitiate angry fate.

The repentant man gladly agreed to do as she wished and hastened to the town in which the faithful maiden lived. Once there, he inquired on every hand, and was told of her steadfastness and great affliction. He lost no time in seeking her parents, to whom he related all his misfortunes, vowing to repair his former wrong at any cost. He then repeated these assurances in the presence of witnesses, to convince the grieving parents of his desire to atone for the evil done to them and their daughter, and was at last brought to the beloved and loving maiden. The youth was no longer such, for time and trouble had altered him not a little—and the true-hearted maiden did not at first recognize him. Thinking that he was some new suitor she once more pretended to be seized with epilepsy. Soon the scene changed, as the pleading lover recalled the truth plighted in the wilderness with the well as witnesses. No room was left for doubt as to his identity. Here, at last, was her rescuer and lover! Mutual explanations and confessions followed, and all of the sad experiences of those years were told to loving ears. The maiden and the youth, no longer young in years, but rejuvenated by love's happiness, were speedily married. Blessed by a happy family and ever increasing prosperity they found full compensation for all of the sorrows which they had endured, and that sweetest of love rewards, true and unchanging love!—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Fun with an Egg.

Here is a trick that will create no end of fun when boiled eggs are served:

Puncture the shell of a raw egg with a pin, and, through the hole thus made, extract the contents. When the shell has become thoroughly dry, pour fine sand through the pin hole until the egg is about one-fourth full. Then seal up the hole with white wax, and your imitation egg will be as natural in appearance as a real one.

When the eggs are served contrive in some way to have the filled one passed to you. Then tell your companions that you can make your egg obey your slightest wish, standing on the edge of a knife, the rim of a glass or wherever you will. Of course, no one will believe you, but you can prove you are right. The only secret is to tap the egg gently every time you change its position so that the sand will settle at the bottom and keep the egg upright in just the position you wish.

Now let me tell you how to make the disobedient egg, with which you may have even more fun than with the obedient one. Make the hole large enough to allow you to introduce half an ounce of fine sand, together with a little powdered sealing wax.

This done, seal up the hole neatly with white wax, and then warm the egg gently over the fire. This will give you a fixed center of gravity in the egg, and, no matter how you may pretend to place it, the weight of the shot held in a mass by the sealing wax, will drag it away from its position just as soon as you release it.

Dandelion's Pretty Trick.

Our canary bird, Dandelion, named for the blossom he so much resembles in color, had the grip with the rest of the family. Mamma took him from his cage every day and gave him medicine and a warm bath. He seemed to enjoy being cared for as much as a child would.

After his recovery his cage door was left open all the time, and he would hop all about the dining room. But he spent most of his time in a sunny south window.

Whenever the family sat down to a meal Dandy expected his share, and if he was neglected too long would remind us by hopping onto some one's shoulder or the corner of the table, and when he got his crumb would go back to his cage satisfied.

Dandy's bath tub stood on the window sill, and there he bathed and dried his feathers in the sun all through the summer months; but when the cooler days came on and a low fire smoldered in the furnace the tiny fellow



Streaky Butter

Streaky butter is a great annoyance to all butter-makers and the cause of it is not always clear. Many claim that it comes from an unequal working in of the salt, others that it is from churning at too high a temperature. In our experience both of these have something to do with it, but by far the most common cause is churning at too high a temperature and then overworking in order to get out the buttermilk. If the cream is churned at as low a temperature as possible, the buttermilk washed out, not worked out, and the salt worked in just enough to incorporate it with the butter the chances of having streaky butter are greatly lessened.

Blucher's Pipe.

Lord Sheffield has lately added another interesting relic to the heterogeneous collection of curiosities which ornament the walls of his cricket pavilion at Sheffield Park. During his recent visit to Belgium he purchased the richly ornamented pipe Blucher carried with him during the Waterloo

Dandelion's Bath.

Somehow discovered the register, and mamma saw him step cautiously onto the edge and look down. Then another hop, and finally, when he had satisfied himself that he was safe, he spread his wings and shook his feathers, and when he was quite dry flew back to the window to take another bath and go through the same performance again.

This he did every day, and many times a day, until the cold wave came. The fire being turned on full force, poor Dandy received such a warm reception that he could never be coaxed to the register again.—Mabel Willis in Chicago Record.

Medieval Necromancy.

There is another marvel performed by those Baci, of whom I have been speaking as knowing so many enchantments. For when the Great Kaan is at his capital and in his great palace, seated at his table, which stands on a platform some eight cubits above the ground, his cups are set before him on a great buffet in the middle of the hall pavement, at a distance of some ten paces from his table, and filled with wine or other good speed liquor such as they use. Now, when the lord desires to drink these enchanters by their enchantments cause the cups to move from their places without being touched by anybody, and to present themselves to the emperor. This every one present may witness, and there are oft-times more than 10,000 persons thus present. 'Tis a truth and no lie! and so will tell you the sages of our own country who understand necromancy, for they also can perform it.—'The True Story of Marco Polo,' by Noah Brooks in St. Nicholas.

Met Two Valuable Friends.

Not long ago two Englishmen traveling in Sweden lost their luggage, and, not speaking the language, were at their wit's end to explain matters. Two young men finally came to the rescue, politely asking in English if they could be of any assistance, and promised to undertake the recovery of the lost goods. Next day the missing luggage came to hand, and the Englishmen met at the railway station their friends of the day before. The Englishmen, naturally, were profuse in their thanks, and asked the pleasure of an acquaintance. "Certainly," answered one of the young men. "I am Prince Oscar of Sweden, and this is my brother Eugene."

He Heard the Proverbs.

Found Parent—You had better go to bed now, Bobby, if you are getting flapping in the morning.

Bobby (sobbing)—Not me, The early bird has ter catch the worms.—World.