

## OBSERVATIONS.

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The property holders of this city must organize for self-protection if they propose to retain any portion of that which can be subjected to taxation. The city charter provides that if any citizen or citizens shall be of the opinion that any civil liability, arising out of contract or otherwise, exists in behalf of the city, against any person or persons, he or they may demand of the city attorney that he commence an action in the name of the city for the enforcement of such liability, and if the city attorney refuses to commence such action or fails to commence it for one week after demand, such citizen or citizens may commence and prosecute such action in the name of the city at their own expense. Members of the city council are required to give bond conditioned that they will not vote for the expenditure of money or the creation of any liability in excess of the amount allowed by law. The action of the city council at its last meeting in voting to employ two attorneys was unauthorized. By this action an opportunity is afforded to test the value of this provision of the city charter giving citizens the right to institute a suit if the city attorney, on demand, refuses to institute the same. An organization of citizens should be perfected and an investigation had, and if it is ascertained that a liability on the official bonds of the members of the council exists on account of any illegal acts since they were inducted into office, action should be at once commenced on the bonds against the delinquent officials and they should be given an opportunity to employ attorneys at their own expense rather than at the expense of the public, and to defend their action in the courts. Nothing but organized and determined action on the part of the taxpayers will rescue this city from impending bankruptcy and, apparently, nothing but the judgment of a court will teach the members of the city council that they are public servants and that they must be made to obey the law. The city charter also gives to any taxpayer in the city the right to appeal to the district court from the allowance of any claim exceeding the sum of \$25.00. If any claim is ever allowed in pursuance of the resolution adopted at the last meeting of the city council an appeal should be taken and payment of the claim should be resisted. The time to organize is now.

## A FIRE-SIDE TALE.

Grandmother leaned back in her huge rocker and shielded her eyes from the heat and light of the grate fire. The shaded lamp was turned low and the tongues of flame in the fire, darting up and disappearing in the chimney, cast ever-moving shadows on her loosely knotted white hair.

"Children," she said in a reminiscent tone, "my uncle, James Gillespie was a man who suffered disappointments. The way that big log burns in the grate, reminds me of him, for he was fond of that kind of a fire."

We settled back in our chairs, closing our books softly. Ned, who was sitting on the sofa, took the pillows from behind his back and lay at full length, his eyes closed.

"He was a quiet man, one of the kind who never says much but is always doing. He was shy and backward when he was a boy, and awkward in his manners, too, but no one ever got ahead of Uncle James in school, except in grammar, and he didn't take to that study

somehow."

"There wasn't a boy in Greenville, nor a man for that matter, who could figure like him, and then there wasn't his equal for miles around in running, jumping, skating and all the rest of the sports we had in those days."

"He grew to be tall, broad-shouldered and straight as an Indian. His hair was black and he had the most honest blue eyes, I ever looked into."

"His face was tanned but flushed as quickly and as easily as a girl's—and girls by the way, were Uncle James' particular bug-bear. He wasn't afraid of tramping home through the woods, late in the darkest night, after a day's threshing, and with only his flail over his shoulder for his protection; but he'd give almost any excuse and go to almost any extreme to keep from going to a party until Mary Evans came to live in Greenville."

Her father built a big house about half a mile from us, and folks used to say that there were more parties given there in the winter than in any other two houses in town.

Mary was very much liked and was taken up and made a leader right away. She had a real sweet voice and used to sing in the church choir every Sunday."

Grandmother leaned forward and brushed back into the ash-pan, a bit of burning wood. Ned turned on his side and looked into the fire. No one said anything and Grandmother went on:

"Well, Uncle James fell in love with Mary Evans. Those who knew him well, knew that Uncle James had loved for the first, last, and for all time."

She was a nice girl, but her head was turned by the flattery and when she finally had at her feet, Uncle James, who before she came, had run from the sound of a girl's voice, she was very much elated. She wasn't a girl who could appreciate, or deserve a man like him, and if she'd realized how much it meant to him, she'd never have led him on as she did.

Finally she promised to marry him and the wedding was set for June. It was the middle of winter then. Uncle James was the happiest man in the state of Maine. He worked early and late to raise enough money to build a house in the spring on some land his father gave him, and used to plan with your father's folks just how much he would be able to make off his little farm every year.

Well, there's no use in telling all about it. You read lots of things like it nowadays, and don't think so much of them. Mary's folks sent her up to Boston that winter to visit a wealthy aunt and to buy some wedding frocks. She meant to stay a week, but Mary and her aunt took to each other, and the visit grew from weeks to months.

Uncle James didn't say much, but he grew a little thinner and older-looking, especially after Mary began to write short notes only once or twice a month. Finally one day, he got a letter which told him in straggling sentences that she was sorry, but it had all been a mistake and she had never loved him and now she had met her fate, and so on—a lot of nonsense and rubbish, and at last asking him to give her up.

I never saw a man break down so completely in a single day,—yes, in a single hour, as Uncle James did. He worked along mechanically, complaining to no one and giving no explanation of the affair. Some time after that, his father died and it took nearly all of his carefully saved money to pay the funeral expenses.

Then he worked for his invalid sister, who was about fifteen years older than he. An old friend of the family moved in with them and did the housework. Things went smoothly enough, and Uncle James spent all his time on the farm. The next spring, his married sister came, after her husband's death, with her two little children, and made three more for

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him to support.

Well, the years went on, and as time passed great changes took place among the old circle of friends in Greenville. Some died, many married and went away, and those of us who remained found cares and troubles of our own, as our families grew up around us. We then saw little of Uncle James. He lived out on the Jamestown road you know, and your father and I went housekeeping over across the creek on the west side as it was called. But we heard of him from time to time. He never married. I always said he never would and his whole heart was bound up in the boy, his nephew "Young Jim" as they called him. There was nothing too good for that boy and Uncle James was so proud of the bright, handsome fellow. He sent him off to school and gave him every advantage in those days, and Uncle James had to pinch and save so that Jim might get on in the world.

Well, the boy did seem a credit to the family. He was handsome as a picture, and we women found it easy to understand why Uncle James loved him, but the men had no patience with him, and sometimes when one or two came back from business trips to Boston, they brought with them tales of Jim's life there at school which weren't to his credit. I always hoped Uncle James never heard those stories.

The blow fell at last though, and dear me! How well I remember what an excitement it made. It was just at the beginning of the Christmas holidays and Uncle James had prepared as a great surprise for Jim, to go and visit him in Boston and come back home for Christmas-dinner. He wasn't a very old man, Uncle James wasn't, but you must remember he was a steady worker all his life, and I think his strength was used up more than any of us suspected. At any rate, when word came to him on the very day that he had planned to start

or Boston, that "Young Jim" had disappeared after having been discovered in the forgery of a note to a considerable amount, Uncle James broke right down. He settled the note and it took everything he had. But I never thought he cared so much for that. He loved the boy so, you see.

He didn't live very long after that, just faded away. He never complained nor murmured, and wouldn't hear a word said against him, and only used to say it must have been in some way his fault, maybe he "hadn't raised him right." And one day in the early spring he died. People came for miles and miles around to go to the funeral, each one with some story of the goodness and gentle, self-sacrificing kindness of the man; no one ever remembered having heard him speak a harsh or angry word. And I say again, when I think of him, that there was a life of disappointment and self-sacrifice, if ever there was one."

And Grandma softly wiped her eyes,  
HARRIET COOKE.

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