

THE FAMILY BIBLE.

"Twixt sober boards, girth thick, page large,
With plain, square text and generous marge,
And cherished plates, thrice sacred it!
First, for its wealth of Holy Writ;
Again, for hands that forth it bore
And ope'd it, to disclose its lore;
Again, for crypt where long have stood
The record of a house and blood.

Oh, peaceful morns! Oh, gentle eves!
When father waked to speech its leaves,
And all the household, gathered round,
Fed on the manna of the sound;
And in a reverent circle there
Upon their knees were joined in prayer—
With quavering age and childhood's throat
United in one common note.

Close shut within this hallowed tome
We read the story of a home.
Here lined, is told beneath each head
When father, mother, children, wed—
Who came to bless sweet joys—and they
With trembling and reluctant pen.
Slow added, e'en as God decreed,
The roll of those who filled His need.

Dear hands that once its pages turned
Have gained the rest they well had earned;
Dear forms that once knelt side by side
Have strayed afar, are scattered wide;
The covers show the print of years;
The records yield to time and tears;
But in its majesty of truth
The text preserves eternal youth!

—Edwin L. Sabin.

A Man and His Word

DUSK was descending over the Wastebrook district—descending prematurely, because the wind from the east drove vast clouds of smoke and fumes from innumerable blast furnaces and towards the setting sun, whose fading light it veiled, though now and then the slanting rays pierced through the great black cloak of commerce and momentarily danced upon the dust-laden air and the dirty, ugly land.

A man stood on the sloping side of one of the many slag hills which lay in all directions, and by their dull gray-



"I'M A MAN OF MY WORD."

ness added immeasurably to the general hideousness of the district. He was counting the furnaces with their belching columns of flame and the great stacks from which issued dense black and yellow smoke, which rolled and coiled across the sky towards the setting sun and floated on the lower stratum of the air like dirty oil.

He was a big, loose-limbed man, in ill-fitting clothes. His long gray beard and mustache and his determined-looking mouth, and his bushy eyebrows cast shadows over his deep-set eyes, which were ever alight with human kindness or flashing resolution. He had a masterly air, and, despite a slight stoop, the bearing of a proud conqueror.

"I'll damp them all down!" he exclaimed, pointing a great finger towards a line of seven furnaces, from behind which rose a cluster of immense smokestacks. "I'll shut them all down! Nay, I won't, though. I'll fire them with my own fuel, and they shall blast old Raymond's fortune as surely as they they are now smelting his ore! I have bided my day, and it has come." His fingers curled into the palm of his hand suddenly, and it was then a fist he stretched out towards Raymond's foundry. "I will crush him with his own weapon! But I will give him a chance—for memory's sake I'll give him one chance!" and his voice softened into a whisper as he lowered his arm.

He descended from the slag hill and turned his broad back on the grimy little city of furnaces, foundries and mills, and went along the rugged, ash-strewn road towards the little valley which lay beyond sound of the roaring town and beyond reach of the sulphur-loaded air, though not beyond the darkening influence of smoke when the wind blew from

the west, for noonday was dusk in the valley when commerce drew its grimy cloak from hill to hill. But now the wind was from the east and blew almost fresh, and the little valley smiled up at John Allen as if it took him for a stranger and was amused in anticipation of his surprise to find it situated so strangely there—to find it green and blooming, while the hilltops and outstretching uplands were barren, brown, scorned as a resting place even by the seed of outlawed thistle-down.

Half way down the winding roadway to the valley, partly hidden by a belt of stunted trees, stood a large house with extensive stabling and an ornate conservatory.

John's eyes took in the details of the place with an angry gleam; it had looked much the same thirty-odd years before, when he had bent his way towards it for the first time. And it brought back to his mind vividly the incidents of that visit; the cold, cutting courtesy of the man who had wheedled away the woman he had loved by flattery and promises; the man's well-bred attitude of cynical attention.

"It is true, Mr. Allen, I have pointed out to her that you are but a working-man; an excellent workingman, I have no doubt, but still a workingman, earning a humble wage, which is, I feel sure, though I have no exact knowledge on the subject, quite insufficient to provide her with more than the mere essentials of life," Raymond had said, with the calmness and deliberation of a man who is not afraid, though Allen could see he trembled. "I do not feel that I have laid the case before her in a way unfair to you, sir; I stand on my feet, for the facts as they stand proclaim her engagement to you—she is a girl of superior rank, tastes and so on—most infelicitous; and your statement that she has declined to see you supports my hope that she has finally decided to become mistress of Valley House, where she will have all she cares to ask for. I may add that I love her; it may excuse anything in my conduct which you, with excusable prejudice, may regard as not quite fair. I do not wish to make enemies. At the same time I am not dependent on any man's friendship."

It was the same Raymond, grown old, who half rose as Allen was shown into the same room more than thirty years later on a somewhat similar mission. The change in Allen was more marked than the change in Raymond. He was now too old to fumble with his cap as he had done—too conscious of his power to be abashed by the other's steady glare, and it was another's heart that he had come to gladden.

"I've come to speak about my boy—my Bob, Mr. Raymond," he said, straightly.

"Sit down, Allen. Your son? Yes; a fine lad—a fine, good-looking young man. I passed him yesterday, and it struck me then that he is just the figure you were at his age," said the iron founder, leaning back in his chair.

"He's a chip off the old block, Mr. Raymond, but trimmed and polished so that the grain of him shows up better than it did or does in the old block itself. He'd make a very fine husband for your daughter."

"A very worthy young man, no doubt," said Raymond, calmly, without change of his agreeable smile. "But the idea you mention is manifestly ri-

diculous. I have told my daughter so, I have told him so, and that ought to have been enough."

Allen drew his great hand over his beard twice or thrice and stared straight at the iron founder.

"I'm not going to argue with you, William Raymond," he said, gravely; "you can beat me at that—you did once before, if you remember. And we're old men now, widowers, both of us, with a child apiece, and so it isn't seemly, perhaps, for us to argue on love affairs. But remember your Phyllis' mother ought to have been my wife, she's the spit of her mother, and my boy loves her as I—well, that's past and ought to be forgotten. It isn't, though, and I—well, I've set my old heart on my boy marrying my lost darling's daughter. There, William Raymond! I know—"

"We should get on much better if you could eliminate sentiment from the discussion, though, really, any discussion on this subject is wasted breath, time and—ingenuity."

Allen stiffened, and the kindly light in his eyes changed to a gleam of anger.

"You mean you're prepared to break her heart as you broke her mother's?" he exclaimed. "For you know you did break Mary's heart! She'd have got over waking up in the midst of your luxuries to find she'd left her heart in my cottage if you'd only treated her properly!"

"Silence, sir, silence!" said Raymond, sternly, white to the lips.

"I'm not saying you treated her badly, man; but you didn't take her right. And what with this and that she pined—you know she did! And you'd see her daughter pine in some swell's house and my boy eating out his heart rather than allow her to marry the son of a workingman!"

"I think you have forced this topic on me very unfairly, Mr. Allen," said the iron founder.

"My boy will be rich—"

"Very unfairly. I was under the impression you wished to see me on a matter of business."

"You're on your last legs, man—you know you are! You're running your furnaces simply to bluff your bankers, in the hope you will get the Casehall contract."

"I think you had better be going, sir," said Raymond, evenly. "I have—"

"Not yet. I've one more thing to say. I have worked for this hour. I said to you thirty years ago, as you stood stiff and cold and held that door open for me—a broken-hearted man—I said that the aim of my life would be to ruin you. I didn't speak rashly, for even then I had ideas in my mind. But now—I give you a chance! Let them marry—they love each other! Their hearts have sought each other in spite of every obstacle; they were born for each other. Give your consent—"

"I have some letters to write," Raymond murmured, glancing over his table deprecatingly.

"You won't?" said Allen, harshly. "Well, look at that!" He tossed a paper under the iron founder's eyes. "That's the Casehall contract, Mr. Raymond, that you depend on getting for your financial salvation. I've secured it, backed by Banksides, who've had their knife in you some time. The contract is the price of my partnership with them, and means a fortune. At one stroke I go up and you go down!"

Raymond nervously picked up the contract and began to peruse it. As he did so the cloud that had gathered on his face faded, and he smilingly tossed the paper back to Allen.

"I wish Banksides joy," he said, in a thin voice. "They can't produce pig iron at the price."

"Yes, we can," returned Allen, confidently. "Under my process we can sell at that price and make 12 per cent better profit than you can. I give you a chance, Raymond! Let Phyllis marry my boy, and you shall have this contract and my process on the same terms on which I go to Banksides."

"You ought to give me credit for having more fixed ideas."

"You won't?"

"Exactly! I won't. I am very much obliged for your magnanimous offer, all the same."

"Well, presently you'll come knocking at my door asking me to buy your daughter for my son to put bread in your mouth! We shall see! You love the girl and you loved Mary, but in your pigheadedness you'd spoil the girl's life and my Bob's as you spoiled her mother's and mine. I wish you good evening, William Raymond."

"Good evening, Mr. Allen," said the iron founder, courteously, moving uneasily in his chair.

"You won't? Remember, I'm a man of my word."

"Good evening, Mr. Allen," repeated Raymond, softly, touching the table bell for a servant.

"No, Bob, dear; I couldn't do it. Father's getting an old man, and he has frightful worries just now. Can I, his only child, the only person he has to love and to love him, absolutely defy his wishes? We must wait, as we have waited, and derive patience from the knowledge that youth and fortune are on our side. I have the distant memory

of my mother to think of, and my heart tells me she would bid me wait."

"You're quite right, my dear," said John Allen, before his son could speak, resting his arms on his great office desk and smiling benignly at the girl. "It can't hurt either of you to wait a little longer, after waiting so long. We all have to bide our time. You can go on preparing the gilded cage, Bob; Raymond will come round."

Robert Allen glanced at his father quickly, and dropped his sweetheart's hand as if he had suddenly been reminded of something he had to say.

"He stopped me this afternoon," he said, after hesitating. "It was very awkward. He was quite pleasant—comparatively that is—and I'll admit it seemed to cost him an effort."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Phyllis Raymond, brightly. "I'm sure he'd be as nice as possible if he could forget to be obstinate."

"Hum!" grunted John Allen. "I'm not sure he'd be nice if he chanced to glance in at this office at the present moment and caught you here, my dear."

"Oh!" cried the girl, springing to her feet. "You don't think he would come here—here!—do you?"

"He might," answered John, dryly. "You remember what happened when the mountain wouldn't go to Mohammed?"

"I thought I was quite—absolutely—safe from detection anywhere in Banksides' foundry, Mr. Allen."

"So you would have been, any time, till to-day."

"Oh, I must go, then. I should sink into the ground if he suddenly came in!"

"It's nonsense, dearest," Robert interposed. "Your father wouldn't put his nose inside the gates for a million of money."

"He's doing it for very much less than that," said John Allen, who was looking out of the window.

"Coming?" cried Phyllis.

"Plenty of time, dearest," said Robert, taking her hand. "We'll perform a strategic movement and retire in order through the works. Quick! Kiss me, dearest; dad's not looking!"

"But he might glance around. I'll kiss you outside."

"The place is full of workmen. There, it's too late!" he muttered, as John turned around.

"See Phyllis safely out of the works, Bob," said the old man, "and come back within call."

Robert opened a door into the foundry and gently urged the girl out of the room; then looked back and whispered significantly: "There's a bankruptcy notice on Raymond's yard gate."

"I know," answered John, quietly, returning to his desk chair. He sat well back, with his chin on his chest, and his great legs stretched out under the desk. There was a heavy, dogged look in his eyes. This was the moment of his triumph; he was already rich, and Raymond was ruined and about to sue for mercy.

Raymond was so long in making his appearance that Allen began to think he had changed his mind and left the foundry. But presently the door opened and he came in. He was evidently embarrassed by finding himself in the office of the man who had crushed him, and his smile was nervous and lifeless.

"Good afternoon, Allen," he said, hesitatingly, offering his hand.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Raymond," returned Robert's father, apparently not seeing the extended hand.

"I have come to say," said Raymond, pulling off his gloves to ease his sense of awkwardness, "that I have carefully reconsidered my attitude toward you and your son, sir, and—er—and I have come to the conclusion that I am not justified in continuing my objection to Phyllis' marriage to Robert. If my change of attitude surprises you, I may explain that I had no personal animus towards your son, but—er—considered, and justly considered, as I think you must realize, that it was not expedient—not sane—to allow the marriage while he lacked the means to make her happy, especially as I was not, even then, in a position to give her a dowry. Now, however, of course, our relative positions are completely reversed, and I have therefore no excuse for maintaining my attitude of objection to the marriage. I may, indeed, say that I welcome your son as my son. But I thought it best to see you on the matter."

Allen nodded his head silently and thoughtfully, and folded his arms across his massive chest, with the air of a man who had just heard what he expected to hear.

There was a pause. Raymond licked his lips and glanced round him nervously.

"Are you open to consider a business proposition?" he said, looking shrewdly at Allen, who nodded. "You probably know—there was a ring of bitterness in his tone—"that my foundry is now in bankruptcy?"

"I have the particulars before me," said Allen, stretching out a hand and picking up a slip of paper. "You were more involved than I thought."

"I could have pulled through if I had not missed one or two contracts at the critical period," returned Raymond, stiffly, "and if I could have completed the contracts I had in hand be-

fore this trouble I could have beat out; but funds were low and my bankers would not back me. Now, I may yet weather the storm. Mr. Allen, if—if you will agree to my proposition that you let me smelt according to your process, I paying you a royalty on every pig-lead filled."

Allen rose, as Raymond paused anxiously and began to pace the office.

"If I can do that," continued Raymond, in a voice that seemed to issue from a parched throat, "I can pull through, for I can execute the contract within the stipulated time, and my creditors, realizing that, since I have your process, I can enter the market with you up to a certain output, will not break me up."

"In a word," said John, gravely, "you want me to save you?"

"You will profit by the royalties. I think it is a fair business proposition, sir."

"I think you might give me credit for having more fixed ideas," Allen muttered, reflectively, combing his beard with his fingers. "I'm a man of my word, Mr. Raymond, and I said I would ruin you, and I have ruined you by fair business methods. But, mon, mon," he cried, suddenly dropping into the old vernacular and stretching out a huge hand, "we're get'n on 'leef, an' Ah canna forget our Mary."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

HUNTED BY A COUGAR.

Narrow Escape of Man Who Thought These Beasts Harmless.

Most hunters and naturalists say that the cougar will not hunt man, writes Charles J. Lisle in Outdoor Life. I thought so for fifteen years, then learned I was wrong. I came near learning it just a second too late.

I had been fishing in a small stream in Northern Idaho, and was about to start for home when I saw a large cougar cross an open space between two trees. I had hunted cougars for years and thought I could safely despise them, even though unarmed. So I went on.

But this cougar was different from others. It came out to meet me. I motioned as if to throw a stick at it.

Still it crept nearer, snarling and showing its teeth as it flattened itself in the grass. I ran a few steps toward it, hoping to frighten it. Instead it crouched for a spring, for I was not more than a rod away.

Thoroughly frightened, I yelled at the top of my voice. No panther ever screamed more horribly, nor in such deadly earnest. That was effective, for the beast dashed back into the wood in fright, while I lost no time in returning to camp.

Securing my rifle, I carefully retraced my path up the stream where I had seen the cougar. As I intended to prospect the country for several days, I dared not risk the animal attacking me again unprepared.

I walked through the heavy windfall timber with rifle cocked and ready for instant use. But I saw no sign of the cougar. I crept over logs, following the course of the stream, up beyond where I thought I had heard the bellowing of cattle.

Still I found nothing. I was obstinately pressing forward when I felt a premonition, an overpowering inclination to look backward. The look came near being my last.

The cougar was hunting me. There on the log I had just climbed over and just in the act of springing on my back was the largest cougar I had ever seen.

Silent and sure as a shadow it had followed my trail, waiting for just this moment. Already it was contracting its muscles as I swung my rifle around.

There was no time to aim. With a quick snapshot I fired at the creature, jerked the lever of the gun desperately to throw in another cartridge and braced myself for the shock.

The shock did not come. The one bullet had done the work of death. The cougar, with its back broken, hung helpless across the log, unable to finish the spring it had begun.

In its agony it seized a young pine tree growing beside the log and made its great teeth meet in the tough wood. The tree was as large as a man's leg.

I have the cougar skin as a trophy, with only two seconds between us in the race for its ownership. I count it as a prize worth keeping. And I go no more unarmed out into the great woods, with the words of naturalists as my only protection against wild beasts. I much prefer a good rifle.

Caustic Comment.

"I notice," said De Ritter's friend, "that Crittiek says you 'write above the heads of the people.' What does that mean?"

"Well," replied De Ritter, "it appears to mean that he considers himself 'the people.'"—Philadelphia Press.

Just After Commencement.

"Are you going to take your son into business with you?"

"Not now. I'm going to wait until he has forgotten all he's been taught."—Lippincott's.

"It's an outrage," said a man to-day. Lots of them, here lately.