

THE NEBRASKA ADVERTISER

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NEMAH, - - - - - NEBRASKA.

THE FARMHOUSE FIRE.

Outside the afterglow's lucent rose
Is smiting the hills and brimming the
valleys,
And shadows are stealing across the
snows
From the somber gloom of the pine-
land alleys.
Glamor of mingled night and day
Over the wide white world has away,
And through their prisoning azure bars
Gaze the calm cold eyes of the early stars.

But here, in this long, low-raftered room
Where blood-red light is crouching and
leaping,
The fire that colors the heart of the gloom
The lost sunshine of old summers is
keeping.
The wealth of forests that held in foe
Many a season's rare alchemy,
And the glow and gladness without a
name
That dwell in the depths of unstinted
flame!

Gather we now round the opulent blaze
With the heart that loves and the face
that rejoices,
Dream we once more of the old-time days,
Listen once more to the old-time voices!
From the clutch of the cities and paths
of the sea
We have come again to our own roof-tree,
And forgetting the loves of the stranger
lands
We yearn for the clasp of our kindred's
hands.

There are tales to tell, there are tears to
shed,
There are children's frowns and
women's sweet laughter,
There's a chair left vacant for one who is
dead
Where the firelight crimson the an-
cient rafters.
What reck we of the world that waits
With care and clamor beyond our gates,
We, with our own in this witching light,
Who keep our tryst with the past to-
night?

Ho! How the elf-flames laugh in glee!
Closer yet let us draw together,
Holding our revel of memory
In the gulling twilight of winter
weather.
Out on the wastes the wind is chill
And the moon swings low o'er the west-
ern hill,
But old hates die and old loves burn
higher
With the wane and flash of the farm-
house fire.
—L. M. Montgomery, in Congregation-
alist.

CURTIS' WATERLOO.

A TALE OF DOMESTIC
CHIVALRY.

JAMES RANDOLPH CURTIS is a promising young man. He works for Smith & Eldridge, dealers in mines of various assortments, oil wells and stone quarries. Mr. Smith is manager of the firm. He likes James Randolph, and says that if he didn't have such an unmentionable kind of a fool for a wife he would amount to something some day. Mrs. Curtis does not know that Mr. Smith says that about her. Neither does James Randolph know it, but he suspects it. He thinks so because, since he came back from his recent trip through Pennsylvania, he had occasion to say something like that himself.

James Randolph toured the Keystone state at Mr. Smith's suggestion. There were pending transactions of importance to be closed, and in his opinion James Randolph was better qualified to close them than any other man in the office, except Mr. Eldridge, who, being flat on his back with rheumatism, was obviously unable to travel.

"I want you to exercise particular tact and discretion in dealing with those people in Scranton," said Mr. Smith when explaining to James Randolph his itinerary. "The fellow in that bunch who really counts is Horace Perkins. Perhaps you have heard of Perkins?"

"Heard of him?" echoed James Randolph. "Well, I should say I have. He married my wife's cousin Kate."

Mr. Smith said "Ah, indeed?" in a tone which might have reasonably been construed as reflecting disparagingly on Mr. Perkins' matrimonial judgment; then, apparently not wishing to become embroiled in a discussion of family virtues, he resumed his instructions on business tactics.

"Perkins," he said, "is the man you want to tie to. Keep at him incessantly. If you can talk him over you will put \$250,000 in the pockets of Smith & Eldridge, and incidentally a small sum in the pockets of James Randolph Curtis."

That proposition gave James Randolph a glimpse of Heaven. In reality he went home that night hanging to a strap in an elevated car, but so buoyant was he that he felt as if he were being transported bodily through billows of scented, roseate air. Judging by his emotions he was still enveloped in chunks of that radiant atmosphere when he drifted into his up-town apartment, but he probably overestimated its beatific qualities. At any rate his wife escaped its influence. Instead of rejoicing at his fine prospects, as James Randolph had expected her

to do, she cried. James Randolph's face assumed a preternatural length.

"There, don't take on so, little girl," he said. "I won't be gone long. I suppose you will be pretty lonesome while I am away, but you can get May Dawson to come and stay with you, and you will get along all right."

"Oh, it isn't that!" protested Mrs. Curtis. "I'm not thinking about myself. I'm thinking about you. I don't see how you are going to get along. I am afraid you can't stand the cooking. You know that since I have been doing my own work you can't bear to eat away from home, and hotels do serve such notoriously bad meals."

James Randolph flushed guiltily. "That's so," he said, with a sidelong glance of curiosity.

Mrs. Curtis led the way to the dining room, and James Randolph followed meekly. "The only hope I see for you," she said, presently, "is in your Scranton visit. You can stop at Horace Perkins' while you are there. Of course, I don't know anything about Kate's housekeeping. She used to be reprehensibly lazy as a girl, but I presume marriage has brought her out of some of her bad habits. And anyway, she'll have servants, and even if she shouldn't have, what you do get to eat will be home cooking and will agree with you better than the slabs of heavy food they serve at hotels and restaurants."

James Randolph looked uncomfortable, as if already smitten with an advance installment of the inevitable dyspepsia. "It's very kind of you," he said, "to take such an abiding interest in my digestion, but I don't see how I can accommodate you. I don't like to stop at Perkins'. It doesn't look well. He is the man I am going to strike for the biggest pile of money while I am gone, and it looks hog-wash to soak him for several hundred thousand dollars' worth of stock and live off him at the same time. It's adding insult to injury."

"I don't know anything about the injury you propose to inflict," returned Mrs. Curtis, "but I do know that Kate and Horace would be insulted if you were in Scranton for a week and didn't stay with them. I'll write to Kate today and tell her you are coming. I am sure she will invite you to be their guest."

James Randolph demurred volubly and with spirit, but his demonstration of disapproval was ineffective. That night the disconnected correspondence with Cousin Kate was renewed with fervor. Two days later an answer was received, and when James Randolph left New York on the following Monday it was the understanding all around that during his stay in Scranton he would accept the hospitality of Mr. Horace Perkins.

The Horace Perkinses lived in style. It was made plain to James Randolph during his first meal that there was no danger of his going hungry while under their roof, and that if his stomach suffered, it would be from overstimulation rather than the lack of it. James Randolph rejoiced in the gastronomic abundance provided and the excellence thereof on his wife's account as well as his own.

"The dear girl will be delighted to know that I am so well taken care of," he said to Cousin Kate. "I must write at once and tell her how I am fixed, otherwise she will be worrying herself sick for fear I am starving to death."

Notwithstanding the business acumen which Mr. Smith flattered himself he had discerned in James Randolph, that young man was in some respects a simple soul. Never was his innocence more blatantly displayed than in his letter to Mrs. Curtis.

"I am living on the very fat of the land," he wrote. "Your Cousin Kate may have been rather lackadaisical when a girl, but she has certainly developed into a remarkable housekeeper. I shall try to tell you what we had for dinner last night. We had some kind of soup with little green specks floating in it—I forget the name of it—two or three kinds of meat with appropriate vegetables, a pudding the recipe for which must have been gleaned from the angels, and coffee that might have been brewed in Heaven. I don't believe New York could show a better menu than that. Really, Minnie, you ought to see me eat. My appetite must astonish the Perkinses. They probably think that I fasted for several weeks before coming to Scranton. I am sorry that I shall wind up the business here in a week or ten days. I shall have to leave. I think I would get fat if I lived with the Perkinses long."

Delectable as was the fare, James Randolph stretched facts a little when describing the variety of the viands served, but he did it in a good cause, and his conscience was in nowise outraged. He awaited with impatience his wife's reply. When it came he wished it had been delayed a little longer. Its brevity frightened him.

"Dear James," she wrote. "I am glad you enjoy Kate Perkins' cooking. Under the circumstances perhaps it would be well for you to prolong your visit indefinitely."

For the first time James Randolph realized that he had overshoot the mark in his former gushing epistle. "By George!" he said, "the little girl is jealous. I thought I understood Min-

nie clear down to the ground, but it seems I didn't. I'm on the track of her idiosyncrasies now, however, and another letter will bring her around all right."

In his second letter James Randolph changed his tactics.

"I am not in good shape at the present writing," he said. "If things continue to go this way I think I shall have to leave the Perkinses and stay at a hotel. I can't stand the cooking. The first day I was here they put their best foot foremost and fairly surfeited me with good things; but since then there has been a slump in the commissary department, and you can't get a decent meal here to save your life. Of course I can't kick, considering that I am a guest in a private family; indeed, true courtesy forbids my writing the facts even to you, but I thought it best to tell you the plain truth so that in case I get sick you will know the cause. I shall be in Scranton only two days longer, and shall try to stick it out here, but if things get too bad I shall, as I said, leave and go to the hotel. But even though I should make the change, I fear that my system is already so deranged that I shall not recuperate until I get home and revive myself with two or three of your excellent dinners."

Every meal that James Randolph ate in the Perkins house after that almost choked him. He was glad when Mr. Smith telegraphed him to go on to Pittsburg for a few days and stop at Scranton on his way back to close the deal with Horace Perkins.

"I suppose," he said to Perkins on their way to the station, "that there is no doubt about my getting the business?"

"None whatever," said Perkins. "I don't mind telling you, however, that it is your own personality that has won the day. There is another man in the field who has offered just as good inducements as your house offered, but in consideration of yourself—family relations and all that—we have decided to give the contract to you. The affair is practically settled. When you come back from Pittsburg everything will be all right and you can go on to New York with the papers in your pocket."

At that James Randolph's conscience smote him violently. He felt that something was going to happen to punish him for his sins, and it did. James Randolph reached Pittsburg on a Wednesday morning. On Thursday he received a letter from Horace Perkins.

"We have given the contract to your competitor," he wrote. "The inclosed letter will explain why."

James Randolph palpitated nervously as he opened the inclosure. It was a letter from his wife to Mrs. Perkins, and ran in this wise:

"My Dear Kate: I really am so indignant that the ties of kinship and the amenities of social life cannot keep me silent. How could you have this heart to treat my husband as you have? If you didn't want him to visit you and didn't intend to furnish him with the necessities of life, why did you invite him? He could have stayed at the hotel. The firm pays his expenses, and even if they didn't, I guess he could have managed it. Really, Kate, I don't know what to think of you. But I know what you have done to James. I have his letter here to quote from 'I can't stand the cooking.' That is what he says. 'You can't get a decent meal here to save your life.' James says he is sure he will be sick after his experience at your house, and he wants me to know what causes it. If anything does happen to him I shall never forgive you. You know he is all I have, and you might at least have given him decent food. James didn't want to complain, and I don't doubt but that he would be quite angry if he knew I said anything to you about it, but I really am so disgusted that I can't control myself."

What James said may not be repeated.

The enterprising agent of the firm of Smith & Eldridge did not stop at Scranton on his way back to New York. Previous to his homecoming his superiors had heard a meager account of the Scranton fiasco; what they demanded of James Randolph was a full explanation. That he did not feel privileged to give, but Mr. Smith, being quickened in wits by his suspicion of Mrs. Curtis, made a stab at the solution of the mystery.

"I'll bet," he said, "that that wife of yours had something to do with it."

"I—I am afraid she did," stammered James Randolph. And whatever else he had to say he said in the privacy of his own home.—N. Y. Times.

Couldn't Stand Such Ignorance.

In the family of the late Sir Henry Wentworth Acland, professor at Oxford, there was so much talk of natural science, particularly at table, that even the servants theorized about it. In one instance the butler gave notice that either he or the page boy must leave. "What is the trouble?" asked the master. "Aren't you well treated?" "Yes, sir; I've nothing to complain of in that way," replied the butler, "but no one can tell, sir, how trying it is to work all day in the pantry with a boy who believes the world was created in periods when I know it was created in days."—Christian Register.

THE OAK AND THE REEDS.



Find a Traveler.

A violent storm uprooted an Oak that grew on the bank of a river. The Oak drifted across the stream, and lodged among some Reeds. Wondering to find these still standing, he could not help asking them how it was they had escaped the fury of a storm which had torn him up by the roots. "We bent our heads to the blast," said they, "and it passed over us. You stood stiff and stubborn till you could stand no longer."

EXCHANGE OF POST-CARDS.

Husband Cut His Pretty Short, But Wife Got Back at Him in Kind.

A wife who knew the aversion of her husband to letter writing said to him, as he was about leaving home for the continent: "Now, John, as neither I nor the children can accompany you, you must be eyes and ears for us, and drop us an occasional post card, telling us anything of interest you may see and hear. Don't forget, will you?"

The husband promised and took his departure, relates London Tit-Bits. The next morning his wife received a post card containing the following message: "Dear Wife—I reached Dover all right—Yours aff."

Though somewhat disappointed, she excused the brevity of the communication on the ground that her husband was doubtless pressed for time. Two days later, however, another card arrived, bearing the startling announcement: "Here I am in Paris.—Your ever." Still later came another: "I am indeed in Paris—Your—"

The wife swallowed her disappointment, and being good at retaliation, seized her pen and wrote: "Dear Husband—The children and I are in Brixton.—Yours—"

A few days later she wrote again: "We are still in Brixton."

In her next communication she grew a little more enthusiastic. She wrote: "Dear Husband—Here we are in Brixton. I repeat it, sir. We are in Brixton. 'P. S. We are, indeed.'"

In due time her husband reached home, and fearing, perhaps, that his poor wife was afflicted with some sort of dementia, hastened to ask the meaning of her strange messages. For answer she slipped into his hand his own three postal cards.

"What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," she said.

It is to be hoped that John profited by the lesson.

Only One Drawback.

"What did Henpeckke say when he caught you kissing his wife?"

"Nothing. But he told me afterward that he'd have killed us both—only he was afraid his wife wouldn't like it."—Town Topics.

An Ingenious Plan.

"Yes, my husband has almost given up smoking!"

"Indeed! It must have been a hard struggle."

"It was. But every time the craving grew too strong for him I let him have one of those bargain cigars I bought for him Christmas and he promptly swore off again."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Not Safe Even Then.

"Did old Gotrox kick you out of the house when you asked for his daughter?"

"No, but he broke my eardrum."

"Eardrum? What, he surely didn't kick you in the head?"

"No; I asked him over the telephone."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

Bulk of Snow.

A cubic foot of new fallen snow weighs five and one-half pounds on the average, and has 12 times the bulk of an equal weight of water.

Beefsteak.

A good beefsteak is one that isn't noted for its durability.

Troubles.

Troubles are not removed by worry.—United Presbyterian.

NOT ALL SWIFT OF WING.

Some Birds Take Their Time in Migrating from the North to the South.

Birds of passage are not prone to manifest haste in changing their places of abode in the spring and autumn. While many of them are exceedingly swift flyers, they do not all use their greatest speed on their journeys. It used to be said that some would fly at the rate of 50 or 60 miles an hour, and to keep this up for eight and ten hours a day, as if anxious to get back to their winter or summer haunts. The very contrary has been found to be the case. The migration journey is a period of harvest-time joy and celebration for the birds. It is a period of feasting and oftentimes of song. The birds move slowly if the food is abundant, lingering in one place for days and weeks where the harvest is particularly good.

Instead of traveling rapidly in their great migration they frequently in the autumn move only at the rate of a few miles a day, and not infrequently only a few miles a week. When the seeds of the weeds ripen in the late summer and fall the millions of migratory birds begin their journey southward, devouring the weed seeds at the most critical stage of their lives. A few of the birds eat a number of seeds throughout the whole summer, but the majority eat them in the early autumn and early spring, a few staying north to pick up seeds which fall on the ground when covered with snow. They gorge themselves with the weed seeds until their stomachs are distended to three times their normal size. All the common song and plumage birds are great seed destroyers.

Blackbirds, meadow larks, sparrow, goldfinches, doves, quails, siskins, grosbeaks and grass birds will eat all the way from 100 to 1,000 seeds of weeds at a single meal. It is becoming evident to students of birds that they are influenced almost solely in their migratory habits by the harvest of weed seeds and not by the climate. Formerly it was supposed that the birds started southward as soon as the chill of autumn approached, but cold, frosty weather might come in August and the birds would not begin to migrate. They are not weather prophets at all, but simply hungry little creatures in search of ripening seeds.

Who Nero Was.

When Sir Charles Gavan Duffy was a member of the Melbourne parliament, he declared that the conduct of the opposition was worse than Nero's. A wealthy but ignorant butcher, also a member of parliament, asked, with scorn and sincerity: "Who was Nero?"

"Who was Nero?" replied the delighted chief secretary; "the honorable gentleman ought to know. Nero was a celebrated Roman butcher."

A Soap Tree.

The tree, sapindus utilis, which is to be cultivated in Algeria as a source of natural soap, has a fruit about as large as a chestnut, with a dark-colored, oily kernel. A cutting from the tree reaches a height of six feet in two years, and attains maturity in six years, when it bears from 50 to 200 pounds of fruit. Water or alcohol is used to extract the soap, which is claimed to be very superior.

The Last Word.

"De time an' trouble you kin save by lettin' de yuthuh man hab de las' word," said Uncle Eben, "generally makes it a putty good bargain."—Washington Star.