A CONFESSION.

I've been down to the city, an' I've seen the 'lectric lights,
The twenty-story buildin' an' the other stunnin' sights;
I've seen the trolley cars a-rushin' madly down the street,
An' all the place a-lookin' like a fairyland complete.
But I'd rather see the big trees that's a-growin' up to home,
An' watch the stars a-twinklin' in the blue an' lofty dome;
An' I'd rather hear the wind that goes a-singin' past the door
Than the traffic of the city, with its bustle an' its roar.

I reckon I'm peculiar, an' my tastes is kind o' low,
But what's the use denyin' things that certainly is so?
I went up to a concert, an' I heard the music there,
It sounded like angelic harps a-floatin' through the air,
Yet, spite of all its glory, an' the gladness an' acclaim,
If I stopped to think a minute, I was homesick jes' the same;
An' I couldn't help confessin', though it seems a curious thing,
That I'd rather hear a robin sweetly pipin' in the spring.

—Washington Star.

ONLY A CHILD.

Of all poor men the most to be pitied is the poor rich man. The man in absolute poverty can be helped; but for the man who is poor with his coffers full of gold there is no earthly help—none, unless something can get away down into his heart and open the way for the incoming of sunlight and warmth. Such a transformation I once knew, and I will tell you how it was wrought. It was done by only a little child.

Rufus Grote was really and truly a miser, though he had probably never acknowledged the fact to himself. At the age of sixty he lived in a close, small, shabby house, in a narrow street down town, though up town where the streets were broad, and where green trees grew, he owned a whole brick block, the rental of which yielded what might have been a magnificent income for any man. In early life Rufus Grote had been disappointed; so while yet a man he had shut himself up within his shell and through all the years of his manhood he had neither asked nor given any love nor friendship. He took his usance even to the pound of flesh, if it was due him by the bond, and he was as ready to discharge all bonded obligations.

One evening, just at dusk, a coach stopped at Rufus Grote's door, and a lady, dressed in black, and accompanied by a child, alighted therefrom, and plied the rusty iron knocker. The miser answered the summons, and demanded the applicant's business.

"Uncle Rufus," said the woman, "I am Mary Sanford, and this is my child. Will you give me shelter until I can find work?"

Mary Sanford was the only daughter of Rufus Grote's dead sister. He had heard of her husband's death, and he had shudderingly asked himself more than once if it might not be possible that his widowed niece would call upon him for assistance. And now the dreaded blow had fallen. What was he to do? Had he followed the first impulse, he would have turned the woman and her child away with a word; but that would have been inhuman. He was caught in a trap. He had to open his door wider, and let them in. And when they were in he was forced, in common decency, to go out and buy a loaf of bread and some cheese.

Mary Sanford was thirty-five; a light, pale-faced, pretty woman; and what of beauty she possessed was due more to the reflex action upon her face and manner of her native goodness than to any outward grace of feature.

Her child, a girl of nine years, was called Flora. She was a plump, dimpled, sunny-haired and sunny-faced child, with the light of a tender, loving heart sparkling in every feature. She was really and truly a thing of beauty and perfect joy.

After eating the bread and cheese, and drinking cold water with it, Mary Sanford told to Rufus Grote the story of her husband's death—how he had suffered long, and how he had left her in utter destitution.

"But," she concluded, as she saw a cloud upon her uncle's face, "I am not come to be a burden upon you. Mrs. Maynard will be in the city in a few days, and will give me work."

"Ugh! What kind of work?" grunted Rufus.

"I shall keep house for her."

Later in the evening, by the dim light of a single tallow candle, Flora crept to the old man's side and climbed into his lap. For the moment he had a thought of putting her away, as he would have put away an insinuating cat, but he did not do it. So she kept on until she had got both hands upon his shoulders.

"You are my Uncle Rufus?" she said, with a quivering, eager smile.

"I suppose so," answered the man, forcing out the reluctant words.

"I haven't got a papa any more. Mayn't I kiss you before I go to bed?"

The little warm arms were around his neck, and the kiss was upon his cheek. The child waited a moment as though for a kiss in return, but she did not get it, and she slipped down and went with her mother to the little dark room where Rufus Grote had given up to their use his own hard, poor bed.

For himself the host had planned to spread a blanket upon the floor in the living room. He had slept there before, and he could sleep there again.

The soil of Rufus Grote's heart was like the soil of other hearts. A seed once forced through the crust would find root there—either good or evil. In all his manhood's life so warm a thing as that childish kiss had not touched his cheek. He did not think of it so much until he was alone in the dense darkness; and then when he could see nothing else, he could see that sunny face, and the musical chirrup sounded again in his ears. At first he would have been glad to believe that the child's mother had instructed her in this, but when he looked over all the circumstances, he knew it could not have been; and before he slept he was glad the child had come to him of her own sweet impulse.

Upon the hard floor, with only a single blanket for bedding, Rufus Grote did not sleep so soundly as was his wont. He dreamed, and in his dreams he saw a cherub, and felt cherubic arms about his neck, with kisses upon his cheek. And he said to himself in his dreams:

"Surely, I cannot be such an ogre if these sweet beings can love me."

In the morning Rufus Grote was up very early. He had thought the night before that he had bread and cheese enough for breakfast; but after the night's dream—he took new thoughts. Without exactly comprehending the feeling, the sense of utter loneliness and selfishness had given place to a warmer sense of companionship and fraternity. He put his hand to the cheek where the impress of the child's kiss had fallen, and a new resolution came to his mind. He went out to a neighboring street corner and purchased tea and sugar and butter, and new warm breakfast rolls, and a small can of milk.

He had just deposited these articles upon the table when Mrs. Sanford made her appearance.

"Good-morning, Uncle Rufus."

Had the host caught that sound when he first arose it would have startled him; but it fell very softly upon his ears now. He had been exercising, and earned the salute.

"Good morning, Mary," returned Rufus; and so odd was it, that the very tones of his own voice surprised him.

"What can I do for you this morning, uncle? May I get your breakfast for you?"

"I will build a fire," said the man, "and then if you please, you may make a cup of tea."

The fire was built, and then he showed where his dishes were.

Mary Sanford was an accomplished housekeeper, and she could accommodate herself to circumstances very narrow. While she was busy a ray of fresh sunshine burst into the room, lighting up the dingy wall, and making golden with its light the atmosphere of the place. It was little Flora, bright, joyous and jubilant, thinking only of love in the first hour of her waking from refreshing sleep. Without a word—only a ripple of gladness dropping from her lips—she went to where the old man had just sat down in the corner, and crept up again into his lap.

"I can't reach your cheek, uncle," she laughed, "without getting up—you are so big and I am so little."

And then she kissed him as she had done the night before; but not as on the night before did Rufus Grote. With a movement almost spasmodic—so strange was it for him—he drew the child back to him, and imprinted a hearty kiss upon her round cheek.

And the words—"God bless you, little one!" fell from his lips before he knew it.

Verily the crust was broken. But had any good seed fallen upon the heart?

What an odd scene for the miser's home! A really good breakfast—a table tastefully laid—the fumes from the teapot fresh and fragrant—and the surroundings cheerful.

After breakfast Rufus Grote was forced to go away on business. And on that day he concluded arrangements for the leasing of a building which was to return him ten thousand dollars a year; and he had meant when the business was done, that he would be poorer than ever, and live on less than heretofore, so that he might lay up more. On this same day one of his houses was vacated up town—a dwelling on one of the broad streets where the green trees grew. He saw his agent and ordered him to let the house as quickly as possible.

That evening, while Mrs. Sanford was out, Flora came to Rufus Grote's side, and looked earnestly up into his face.

"Uncle," she said, with quaint seriousness, "don't you want me to get up into your lap?"

"Why do you ask that?" demanded the old man.

"Mamma said I mustn't. She said you wouldn't like it."

"What made her think I shouldn't like it?"

"Because she said you wasn't happy; and she cried when she said that her little girl mustn't make her Uncle Rufus dislike her."

"And what did you say to that?" asked Rufus Grote, with awakening interest.

"I told mamma that I would put my arms around your neck, and hug and kiss you, and see if I couldn't make you love me. And if you loved me, I knew you would let me sit in your lap."

When Mary Sanford came in, half an hour later, she found her child in Uncle Rufus' lap, her sunny head pillowed upon his bosom, and his strong arms entwining her.

The seed had fallen, and had taken root!

Three days afterward Rufus Grote saw his agent, and told him that he need not hurry about renting the empty house up town.

On the evening of the same day Mary Sanford came in with a letter in her hand, and found Flora nestled in her uncle's arms.

"Uncle Rufus," she said, "I have received a letter from Mrs. Maynard. She will be at home day after to-morrow."

"And she wants you to take charge of her house?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Wait till she comes."

And the old man held the little child in his arms until it was time to go to bed.

On the following morning Uncle Rufus told Mary that he wanted her to take a ride with him during the forenoon.

She said she would be at his service.

And later a fine coach drew up before the door, and Uncle Rufus came in and bade Mary make ready, and to make Flora ready also.

They rode up town, and when they stopped Uncle Rufus handed them out before a house with great chestnut trees growing in the yard and upon the sidewalk. And he led them into the house. And in the broad, handsome parlor he turned and spoke, holding Flora by the hand.

"Mary," he said, "this little child has promised to make her old uncle happy, and I will not give her up. This house is mine. If you will come and help me take care of it, I will live in it. What say you?"

What could she say? She saw the new light upon her uncle's face; and when he took the child in his arms and held the sunny head close upon his bosom, she saw the blessing of the coming time. She said, with a burst of tears—

"Dear uncle, if Flora and I can make you happy, you may command us both."

There was wonder up town and there was wonder down town when Rufus Grote appeared a well dressed, smiling, happy man.

And in the mansion beneath the shade of the great chestnut trees there was peace and joy. An angel, in the shape of a little child, had touched a human heart long buried in cold darkness, and brought it forth to love and blessing.—Waverley Magazine.

Lord Strathcona.

Lord Strathcona began the career which has led him to the House of Lords and a colossal fortune as a "red-haired, freckled, rough-hewn Scotch lad" in the wilds of Labrador. He was in the employment of the Hudson Bay Company and his duty was to barter for furs with the natives and pack them off to Montreal—work which involved long and perilous journeys by canoe and on snow shoes, amid hardships which would have proved fatal to anyone less sturdy than the Scottish saddler's son.

The trouble with having a good word for everybody is that when you pay a compliment, it doesn't count.

OLD FAVORITES

The Moneyless Man.

Is there no secret place on the face of the earth
Where charity dwelleth, where virtue hath birth,
Where bosoms in mercy and kindness will heave,
And the poor and the wretched shall ask and receive?
Is there no place at all where a knock from the poor
Will bring a kind angel to open the door?
Oh! search the wide world, wherever you can,
There is no open door for a moneyless man.

Go look in yon hall where the chandelier's light
Drives off with its splendor the darkness of night;
Where the rich hanging velvet, in shadowy fold,
Sweeps gracefully down with its trimmings of gold;
And the mirrors of silver take up and renew
In long lighted vistas the 'wildering view;
Go there at the banquet and find if you can
A welcoming smile for the moneyless man.

Go look in yon church of the cloud-reaching spire,
Which gives back to the sun his same look of fire,
Where the arches and columns are gorgeous within,
And the walls seem as pure as a soul without sin;
Walk down the long aisle—see the rich and the great,
In the pomp and the pride of their worldly estate;
Walk down in your patches and find if you can,
Who opens a pew for a moneyless man.

Go look to your judge in his dark flowing gown,
With the scales wherein law weigheth equity down;
Where he frowns on the weak and smiles on the strong,
And punishes right while he justifies wrong;
Where jurors their lips to the Bible have laid
To render a verdict they've already made;
Go there in the court room and find if you can
Any law for the cause of a moneyless man.

Go, look in the banks, where Mammon has told
His hundreds and thousands of silver and gold;
Where, safe from the hands of the starving and poor
Lies pile upon pile of the glittering ore;
Walk up to their counters—ah, there you may stay
Till your limbs shall grow old and your hair shall turn gray,
And you'll find at the bank not one of the clan
With money to lend to a moneyless man.

Then go to your hovel—no raven has fed
The wife who has suffered too long for her bread;
Kneel down by her pallet and kiss the death frost
From the lips of the angel your poverty lost;
Then turn in your agony upward to God
And bless while it smites you the chastening rod;
And you'll find at the end of your life's little span
There's a welcome above for a moneyless man.

—Henry Thompson Stanton.

SOME ODD RAILROAD RULES.

Curious Early Experiences in Transportation in Pennsylvania.

Some of the regulations in force on the earliest railroads built in Pennsylvania read very queerly in these days of "limiteds" and "flyers," says the Boston Transcript. A number of them are quoted in a brief paper read before the Engineers' Society of Western Pennsylvania on early experiences in transportation by Antes Snyder, and abstracted in part in the Scientific American supplement. Says this paper:

"When the commonwealth opened the Philadelphia and Columbia Railway the theory was that the State furnish the roadway and that any one who pleased could furnish his own vehicle and motive power and use the railway whenever he wished by paying the State tolls for its use, just as the turnpikes of the day were used. But it was soon discovered that a certain character of vehicles was needed and that rules and regulations as to times and manner of using the railways were absolutely necessary to effect their successful operation. The ordinary shippers found it too expensive to fit themselves with the necessary plant and that they could get this transportation done by large and well-equipped shippers much more cheaply than they could do it themselves, so that in practice the business drifted into the hands of a few individuals and companies, who did this service for the many. The railway as constructed was intended for the horse as motive power, though the locomotive was being introduced as an experiment shortly after the railway was completed. The following among the rules and regulations adopted by the canal commission for the regulation of the railway may be of interest.

"'Sec. 22. No car shall carry a greater load than three tons on the Columbia and Philadelphia Railway, nor more than three and a half tons on the Portage Railway, nor shall any burden car travel at a greater speed than five miles per hour, unless the car body and load shall be supported on good steel springs.'

"'Sec. 108. It shall be the duty of the conductors of cars moving with less speed upon the railways, upon notice by ringing a bell, blowing a horn or otherwise, of the approach of a locomotive engine or other cars moving in the same direction at a greater speed, to proceed with all possible dispatch to the first switch in the course of their passage, and pass off said track until said locomotive engine or other cars moving at greater speed can pass by. The conductors of the slower cars are directed to open and close the switches so as to leave them in proper order. Any person who shall refuse or neglect to comply with the provisions of this regulation shall, for every offense, forfeit and pay the sum of $10.'

"It must have been a very interesting and novel sight, indeed, when the horse and the locomotive weer used indiscriminately on the same track and were struggling for supremacy as the future motive power of our railroads, and the approach of a locomotive was heralded by the tooting of a horn. Even at that time the right of way was given to the fast horse."

SOME SWEARING DEFENSIBLE.

Many Great and Good Men Have Used an Occasional Oath.

According to the Anti-Profanity League the swearing habit is "the national evil." Undoubtedly the use of profanity is extremely prevalent; a person needs merely to keep his ears open on the street to learn this, says the Boston Transcript. But whether it is so general as to justify one in terming it the national evil is a matter of opinion. Not all swearing, moreover, is wholly indefensible. There are various kinds of swearers and it will not do to lump them in one class with a single label. Besides the habitual and commonplace swearers, whose profanity is mere redundant and colorless verbiage, and the vulgar and diffuse swearers, whose oaths are rank and noisome, one must recognize also as a distinct category the discreet and moderate swearers who employ an occasional oath with fine emphasis and artistic effect.

Many great and good men belong to the last class. Even the father of his country is said to have sworn vigorously when the emergency seemed to require departure from his customary rule of unvarnished speech. This sort of discriminating profanity is vastly different from the causeless and gratuitous swearing of habitual and vulgar oathmongers. Indeed, the man who now and then vents his emotions in an oath is rather preferable to the one who always bottles up his feelings, however strong the provocation to break forth. A robust ebullition is better than ingrowing profanity. Silence may be as profane as words under certain circumstances. A saying of Joseph Choate occurs to the settler in this connection. A noted prelate was once playing golf with Mr. Choate, and after foozling a tee shot egregiously, stood looking at the ball for several moments. After waiting for the bishop to say something, Mr. Choate remarked: "Bishop, that was the profanest silence I ever heard."

As for the Anti-Profanity League, the purpose of the organization is certainly worthy, but somehow the settler cannot develop a high degree of enthusiasm in such a cause. He is a bit weary of anti crusades of all sorts. Movements for the suppression of this and that and what not fail to interest him profoundly. It seems to him that what is needed in the field of social reform is not so much the suppression of bad things as the promotion of good things. Reformers should concentrate their energies on positive and constructive work, rather than purely negative and restrictive undertakings.

Might Have Been Worse.

Bourke Cockran was condemning a certain popular novel.

"This novel," he said, "is as poor and barren as Elmo County land."

"Is Elmo County land very poor and barren?" asked one of Mr. Cockran's interlocutors.

"Is it?" he said. "Well, I should say it is. Once two strangers rode on horseback through Elmo County, and the barrenness of the land amazed them. Nothing but weeds and rocks everywhere. As they passed a farmhouse they saw an old man sitting in the garden, and they said:

"'Poor chap! Poor, poverty-stricken old fellow!'

"The old man overheard them, and called out in a shrill voice:

"'Gents, I hain't so poor an' poverty-stricken as ye think. I don't own none o' this land.'"

After a man has been engaged three or four weeks, he begins to find opportunities to take sides in her quarrels.