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THE FAMILY STORY

SISTER CALLINE'S CHILDREN.

THE train ran into a little station in the heart of the pine woods, and the conductor sprang to the platform.

"Hurry up there!" he called, running forward, to the negro coach.

The steps were overflowing with pickaninies, so black that at first sight their small features would have been indistinguishable but for the wide crease on each face, filled with even rows of teeth, startlingly white in contrast with their sooty environment.

A fat, good-looking negro, holding an oval bundle, wrapped in an old shawl, close to her breast, seemed to be the center of the crowd, and an old, old negro man, grizzled and wrinkled, was hovering around its margin.

"Is you got um all, Sister Calline?" he asked anxiously.

"Clare ef I know!" said the woman, running her eye over the company.

"Pears lak dere's one on um mislin'!"

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, and the train moved.

"Hyar, mistah!" shrieked Sister Calline, "you'se ca'n' off one o' my chillen'!"

The conductor laughed good-naturedly, and was gone.

"Oh, Lawd!" moaned the woman. "He's done ca'ed off one of um, suah!"

The station agent sauntered near. He wore that intensely bored expression only possible to a man who spends his life in a piney woods clearing, seeing four trains a day go in and playing checkers on a barrel head in the intervals.

One wonders if the lunatic asylums are not largely recruited from this class.

"Orter have tied 'em along a rope, so's they couldn't get away," he said.

Sister Calline turned her black velvet orbs in his direction.

"You call dat train back, I say," she cried. "He's done ca'ed off one o' my chillen'!"

"S'pose I can call the train back?" said the man, contemptuously. "If you're sure one of 'em is mislin' you'll have to set down and wait here till the train comes back. They'll bring it, I reckon."

"Oh, my pore lil' chile!"

Tears began to stream down the black face.

The wrinkled old uncle looked deeply distressed.

"Is you plin' blank suah one on um's mislin', Sister Calline?" he asked, sympathetically.

Her eyes wandered, vague and troubled, over the dusky, shifting crowd of faces.

"Use mos' puffedly suah," she said.

"Better count 'em," suggested the agent. "How many are there, anyhow?"

"Dere's Lu Roxy Adline, Lucy-aller—"

"Es here, mammy!" interrupted a long-limbed girl of 14.

"I told you to count 'em!" said the agent, impatiently.

"I can't count, mas'r! I see bawf afore de wuh. But anyhow dey say dere's leben on um."

"Sister Calline," said the old man, tenderly, "le's we set right down hyar an' I'll count 'um fer ye. Use a scholar."

"You sholy is kind, mistah," said Sister Calline, gratefully, sitting down on the edge of the platform.

The agent laughed shortly and turned away.

The grizzled old uncle took a red and yellow handkerchief from his pocket and carefully dusted the end of the planks before he took his seat.

He wore a threadbare black suit which had undoubtedly once moved in high society.

Sister Calline looked at him with interest.

"I reckon dat you mus' be a preacher, sah," she said, defiantly.

"Madam, I is. Use been preachin' de word dese nine years, eber sense my pore old lady died. I was a powerful sinner afore dat."

Sister Calline looked awed.

"I was, suah!" said the old man, retrospectively. "But use come inter de kingdom now suah 'nuff, bress de Lord. Is you got a husband, Sister Calline?"

"Use a pore widder, mistah, wid all dese chill'en ter scuffle fer, an' de Lawd knows what use gwine ter do."

Uncle glanced at the bundle in her arms. It had begun to move and whimper.

"Dat your baby, chile?" asked uncle, innocently.

"Dis my baby," replied Sister Calline, looking down at the sooty mite in her arms with maternal pride.

"My po' ole man neber see dis baby. He was blowed up de biler bustin' in de mill where he wuked. He was done killed when dey brung him home. De doctors tried an' tried to pump some life later him, but he never spoke no mo'."

"For de lan's sake!" ejaculated the old man.

Compassion was written all over his kind old face. He had been a good darky from his youth up, and his past was purely fictitious.

"What de mattah wid you ole lady you done lost?" asked Sister Calline.

"Consumpshun," replied the old man, solemnly. "It runs in our family. Ole Cunnel Kent's ma died ob it, an' de cunnel's first wife died ob it an' all mistahs died, too. An' den my ole lady took it an' she died. It's a terrible disease."

"Dat sholy is so?" coincided Sister Calline. "Seuse my insurance axin' you, mistah. Does you git you libin' preachin'?"

"De folks pay me some, an' den use got a nice piece of lan' an' a lil' house. My ole mas'r give um ter me," said the old man, with modest pride.

"Sho! Ain't you too old ter wuk?"

"I wuks some, an' de ars helps me. Use de onliest one ob ole sarven's lef. Use 95 year ole!"

"Sho, now!" said Sister Calline, much impressed.

"How ole you is, Sister Calline?—hopin' you'll seuse me fer axin'."

"I dunno 'zactly," said Sister Calline, studying a little. "I s'pect use 90—gwine on 50."

They had become so interested in their humble annals that the pickaninies had been lost sight of. They were scattered along the railroad line gambling like a menagerie turned loose.

"Does you wan' me tu coun' you chillen, Sister Calline?"

"Go'se I does. Hyar! You-all. Come hyar."

The children paid no attention.

"Dey needs disserplainin', Sister Calline."

He rose. "Chillen, chillen!" he called in a voice of authority.

The black cloud drew together and bore down on the station-house.

"Now you-all stand still onwell dis gentleman couns' you," commanded the mother. "Lu Roxy, min' yerself. Abe Linkum, stan' up. Don' scrouge so! How he gwine coun' you, ef you dodges roun' dat away?"

A mild degree of order at last prevailed and the old man began.

"One, two, thee, fo', five, six, seven, nine, eight, ten! Dere ain't only ten."

"Dawter be leben, suah," said Sister Calline. "Oh, what I gwine ter do?"

"I'll coun' 'um ober agin'," said the old man, kindly.

Sister Calline wiped away her tears. "You am so kind, mistah! I knowed you was a good man when Brer Martin tole me ter keep long er you on der train."

"An' I knowed you was a good woman when Brer Martin tole me 'You take good ca' o' Sister Calline,' says he. Now I'll coun' 'um agin'."

"One, two, thee, fo' and so on. They went over and over this, but by no legerdemain of counting could ten be made eleven.

Sister Calline grew more and more distressed and was just breaking into hysterical sobs when the train whistled at the next station below.

They both sprang up and Calline screamed to the children, who came flying across the track like a flock of wild blackbirds.

When the train drew up and the conductor stepped off, there was Calline to meet him.

"Please, mistah; has you brung back my chile?" she tearfully pleaded.

He looked at her.

"Donner and blixen! What do you mean, woman?"

"Use got 'leben chillen,' groaned Sister Calline, "an' dis gentleman has coun'd 'um ober an' ober, un' dere ain't only ten."

The conductor ran his eye over the group.

A score of heads were thrust out of the coach, and a murmur of amused sympathy stirred along the line.

"H-m!"

He pulled forth his book hurriedly and turned over the pages.

"Pass Calline Jackson and eleven children."

He glanced over the black, bobbing heads and back at the woman.

His eye fell on the bundle in her arms.

"Great Joye! What's the matter with the baby making eleven?"

There were roars of laughter and much waving of hats and handkerchiefs as the train moved out.

"You done coun'd um wrong, Mistah," said Sister Calline, looking up reproachfully at the old man.

"Is dey all hyar?" he asked, with dignity.

"Co'se dey's all hyar."

"Den don't dat plintedly show dat I coun'd um right?"

Sister Calline's dark countenance wore a troubled expression, but as they

went along the piney woods road toward Kentville it gradually cleared up, and when they came in sight of Kent Hall it was beaming.

"Dere's de cunnel!" said uncle, pointing to a gentleman dressed in a white duck suit, who sat comfortably in a big armchair on the gallery.

"He's one o' de ars. You jes' wait here a spell ontel I go an' tell him."

"Well?" said Colonel Kent, good-naturedly, laying down his newspaper.

"What is it, Uncle Dick?"

"Use jes' come ter tell you, cunnel, dat use foun' a good woman dat I laks the bes' in the world, an' we'se fixed our min's dat we'll marry fore long. We reckons ternaite is de bes' time."

"Marry! Good Lord!" said the colonel, astonished. "Such an old fellow as you are?"

"I is ole, for a fac', Mas'r, but use lived alone nine years, an' its mighty lonesome—"

"That's so," said the colonel, kindly.

"An' pears like I can't stan' dt no longer. An' Sister Jackson needs a husband ter help her raise her chillen. Dere's leben chillen an' none ob 'em mislin', coundin' um right."

"Eleven! How in the name of General Jackson are you going to take care of eleven children?"

"Dey's gwine ter take ca' o' me, Mas'r," said the old man, eagerly.

"Dey's mighty peart chillen, mighty peart, an' dey ca' pick a heap ob cotton an' hoe co'n an' taters an' weed in de gyarden an' do a power ob oder turns."

The curiously wizened old face shone as if he had just come into a fortune.

"An' cunnel," he went on, "use gittin' too ole ter wuk much, an' I thinks my meetin' up wid Sister Calline is a special providence. I wants ter git de oration roun' soon dat dere's gwine ter be a weddin' down ter my lil' house ternaite."

"Go ahead then," laughed the colonel. "The mistah will have a cake baked for you, and, by George, it'll have to be a big one to go round."

The cake was baked in the big iron bake kettle of antebellum associations, and there was a festival in the cabin down by the creek which lasted into the small hours.—New York Tribune.

THE PIANO NUISANCE.

Protracted Practicing Leads to Severe Nervous Maladies.

Gouped, the composer, bitterly resented the omnipresence of the average piano player, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. He was strongly in favor of a somewhat severe pianoforte tax.

His argument was that ninety-nine out of every one hundred who learned to play the instrument failed to attain to more than a superficial stage, either of conception or execution, and that they wasted valuable time, which might otherwise be employed in doing something that would benefit them. He also contended that piano practice of students constituted a public nuisance, and was irritating and exasperating to such a degree as to become an outrage on peacefully inclined citizens. The proposed tax was never levied, but some figures published by a French scientist may possibly in some measure tend to restrict the indiscriminate teaching to musically very young children. It is declared that a large number of nervous maladies from which girls of the present day suffer are to be attributed to playing the piano.

Children who ought to be exercising in the open air are kept at dreary and distasteful work at the keyboard hour after hour daily, and the nerves simply will not stand the strain. It is said to be proved by statistics that of 1,000 girls who study this instrument before the age of 12, no less than 600 suffer from this class of disorders, while of those who do not begin until later there are only some 200 per 1,000. The prosecution of the study of the violin by the very young is proved to be equally injurious. The remedy suggested is that children should not be permitted to study either instrument before the age of 16 at least, or, in the case of delicate constitutions, not until a later age. So far as the piano is concerned, however, it is possible that the true remedy may be found in a better method of teaching. The main point in early tuition is to "form" the hands and give them flexibility and strength. This is purely mechanical, and it can be done away from the pianoforte keyboard. The endless repetition of sound, which is responsible for much of the wear and tear of the nerves of young musical students, is thus avoided, and better progress is made from the concentration of the mind and technique only. The objection has been raised that such a system makes only those "mechanical" players who would be so under the ordinary system of tuition. To those of true artistic instinct it is an inestimable help, and shortener of labor.

A Sailor's Remarkable Escape.

A seaman on H. M. S. Edinburgh recently had a remarkable escape. He was at work on a ladder on the bow of the vessel as she was going into Portsmouth harbor, steaming ten knots an hour, when the ladder broke and he was thrown into the water directly under the keel. He came up again in the wake of the ship, two ship's lengths astern, unhurt, having escaped the suction of the vessel and contact with the propellers.

HOME COMING.

Set o' sun and toil is done,
Glad, oh, wheels, while others tread!
Homeward thro' the night I run
To the heaven just ahead.

Light o' love, light o' love,
Other refuge I have none,
Thou the worth of life must prove
While the fight is yet unwon.

Scant the fare that love may share,
Pale the lips that love may press,
Stern the burdens love must share,
Fierce the wrongs that wait redress.

Heart o' life, heart o' life,
Maana in the wilderness,
We should perish in the strife
But for love's strong tenderness.

Speed the day when we may say,
Justice reigns and men are free;
Peace shall kiss us in the way,
Labor crown us plentifully.

Love is all! Love is all!
Sound the word from sea to sea,
Hand to hand we stand or fall,
Ho, for love and liberty!
—New York Sun.

TRAGEDY OF A MINE.

From the shoulder of Baldy, where the mine was, you could see far out to westward where the Pacific rolled in a blue sheet, which was the undulating reflection of the heavens above. If you were on Baldy you would say that there could be nothing more sublime in the world than the ocean, and if you were out at sea you would be firm in the faith that no more magnificent thing could exist than the great sentinel mountain.

Young Bradshaw was just from college when his father sent him up to the mine as a sort of general manager to serve through the late summer and the coming winter. The water supply showed plain indications of early exhaustion, and so the fifty or more men who had been employed in bombarding the gravel with a six-inch stream, were called down to Los Angeles and paid up and discharged. The exodus was general. Even Yardley, the most respected and most efficient deputy sheriff who had ever hired to a mine company, in order that peace might be preserved in an official way, went with the others. Only Young Bradshaw and Burleigh were left to tenant the cabins and watch the pipe. It was eighty miles to Los Angeles in a horizontal line and nearly two more miles straight down toward the center of the earth. The mountain was wild and majestic and inaccessible and when the men went away that meant solitary confinement.

In the building of the pipe line 3,000 tons of iron and steel had been dragged and maneuvered up a shoulder for many tortuous miles, every pound representing human effort, as even a burro could not go into that labyrinth set on end. As Bradshaw's father, the president of the mining company, had said in the beginning, "It took something that could swear and yell and get out of the way quickly to get that piping in place."

Burleigh was a man of 30, a giant in stature, with the magnificent health which demands association with healthy things. He was not born to the mines as was Henky Pete, who could spend days in solitude, speaking no word to any one. Henky Pete was ordinarily the man who was left over winter, when the snow piled and the cabin for six months was filled with the smoke which could not go up and which, therefore, was absorbed by his person, making him resemble in the spring a cured ham. But this time Henky Pete was taken to Los Angeles with the others and turned loose. Burleigh, a man of reasonably intelligent parts, was preferred by young Bradshaw as a companion, for the latter thought an intelligent and well-demeaned mite-mate would be preferable to the stupid Russian. There could be some sort of intercourse between them.

It was July when the men had gone to Los Angeles, and by the middle of September Young Bradshaw had finished Strabo and had got well on the way of translating him backward. He had by this time read every newspaper which had before been pasted to the wall of the cook-cabin, and had one by one washed the journals off with warm water so as to see what was printed on the other side. He had started a diary and had returned to it fifty times, only to find that he could possibly record nothing more than "Monday—both well. Cloudy below." He and Burleigh had wandered up and down the sub-pipe line to the reservoir, until the familiar rocks had grown unbearable in their familiarity. Sometimes they turned on water and washed for a few hours, and tried in this hydraulic search for gold to distract thoughts from the frightful lonesomeness of close mountain and distant sea. Burleigh found the solitude harder to bear than the boy from the college, for the boy really found old little things to take up minute sections at least of his boyish mind. Burleigh, a man of experiences, could not do this. He grew morose and fretful and cooked villainously. Both had dyspepsia by the last of August.

Toward the middle of September young Bradshaw came in from a patrol of the pipe line and found that Burleigh had cooked for ten instead of two. The plates were set, also, for ten.

"What's this for?" the boy cried with

abounding delight. "Are there some tourists in camp?"

Burleigh looked ferociously about. "No!" he snarled. "Who comes into this hell of loneliness? No. But I am going to have company. I have cooked for Harkins and Frye and Jaquith and half a dozen of the best of the men who were here, and if they are not on hand to eat it's no fault of mine. I shall imagine they are in the mine anyway, and in that way perhaps I can get comfort. Here, Gordon," addressing the space which was fronted by the tin dish at his left, "here, have some bacon," and he set a dripping slice of meat upon the plate. And throughout the meal he talked as though the former workmen were present once more.

"Did the second blast catch you, Baker?" he inquired of the plate opposite young Bradshaw. "I thought one of those chunks had your left leg sure. You want to find your hole a little sooner or we'll have to hustle for bandages."

Every day after that Burleigh set those plates and fed those ghosts with serious attention. Bradshaw, though a thoughtless and unwitting boy, saw by this time that this business meant something more than he had at first counted it, which was a joke. Once he had ruled at Burleigh for apologizing to Yardley for the burned condition of the bacon and Burleigh had turned on him with a look in his face which he did not relish and had asked him what he meant by saying Yardley was only a three-legged camp stool.

"Yardley," said Burleigh, "was and is the penal officer of this camp; the man who maintained peace, the justice, the chief of police and everything which induced decency. If he isn't entitled to good bacon, who is?"

It was the next morning that Bradshaw was awakened by the sound of profanity. Although he was asleep he knew it was profanity, for Burleigh's kind of lurid discourse could not be mistaken even when it came to you in dreams. Young Bradshaw woke with a start and found Burleigh standing over him with a knife, the hand that held it being poised to strike. Just then the October sunlight came out over Baldy and into the slit above Bradshaw's bunk and Burleigh drew back.

"I thought you were that thief Horton," he remarked. "I shall kill him unless Yardley acts quicker than me. Yardley is the only man who can keep that villain's life in his body. If Jim Yardley comes to me and tells me in the name of the people of California that I must desert, why, Jim Yardley represents the law and that's all there is to it." And mumbling, Burleigh withdrew his giant form from the cabin.

Young Bradshaw went to the door and looked out. The cloud above told its story. The early snow was coming. There was no use attempting to get out of the mine property. In three hours every pass would be choked and no man having ventured out could hope to do more than die. It was an insane giant—a man crazed from loneliness—behind, and certain death in the snow before. Over by the place where the old bedrock was washed bare he could hear Burleigh shouting for Horton to come out and fight before Yardley had a chance to arrest them and spoil the thing.

When you feel that one way or the other death is at hand you either collapse or become a hero. There is no middle ground. The decision has to be formed quickly. Young Bradshaw saw one chance in a million of escaping ultimate destruction at the hands of the maniac. It was certain that his hatred for Horton could and would easily be switched in the six months yet before them to a hatred of Bradshaw, if in fact the lunatic would even continue to recognize him as Bradshaw at all. There was the danger. Suppose in the absence of Horton or anything representing him Burleigh should conclude that the slight young collegian was the real, the true Horton of his vengeful dreams.

Young Bradshaw went over to the edge of the wash, and looking down into the cave, called loudly:

"Burleigh, you infernal fool! You black-hearted hound! Come up here, d—n you!"

Out from behind an enormous bowlder leaped the insane miner, that horrible knife in his hand and the fire of fury in his eye.

"Who's that said that?" he shrieked. "Who is it, for by the Lord he wants to pray now!"

Straight as a pillar towered the spare frame of the boy at the edge of the wash.

"Who, you cursed blowhard? Who, you red-faced cur? Who? Why, Jim Yardley! Who do you suppose it is but Jim Yardley? What do you mean by roaring around here disturbing every man in the mine at his work? Come here and give me that knife and then come along to the court-cabin where you belong, you white-livered jailbird."

"Jim Yardley, you're the only man on earth that dares talk that way to me. You know it, too, and you rub it in. Say, Jim," with a sudden change to the whimper of a beaten dog, "you'll let me out pretty soon, won't you?"

"I'll let you out when the snows go away if you behave yourself. See, it's beginning to fall now."

"Yes, and I'm good for six months of it."

When young Bradshaw's father and the Vice President of the mine with a party reached the shoulder of Baldy in

the early April of the next spring they battled through drifts to find a slight youth with white hair waiting, waiting, waiting. Over in the court-cabin, with its great iron bars and its massive door, stalking up and down before the one window, was a giant with living fire in his eyes, who continually yelled: "Yardley! Yardley! Oh, Jim, please, ain't time pretty near up!"

In afterward telling of the horror of that winter young Bradshaw used to say that in future when he wanted to live in a lonely place he would leave all healthy and intelligent men behind and associate himself solely with some such obtuse and unimaginative dod as Henky Pete.—Chicago Record.

Weeping Over the Ice-House.

Much of the charm that comes from visiting honored graves, and seeing treasured relics, arises from a fervid imagination. A lady, writing in Arthur's Magazine, illustrates this truism by an anecdote. She says that many years since, before the age of steam and telegraph, her aunt, while returning to Richmond from a visit to Philadelphia, under the care of Bishop Moore, accepted an invitation to dine at Mount Vernon.

Arriving there early in the day, my aunt felt so much excited at the idea of being at the home of Washington, the Father of His Country, that she determined to visit his tomb alone.

Without making any inquiries, she proceeded through the grounds till she reached a small building covered with evergreens, which she took for granted was the last resting-place of General Washington.

After shedding a few patriotic tears, and experiencing much exalted emotion, she plucked a bunch of evergreens, and at dinner whispered to Bishop Moore what she had done.

Late in the evening, it was proposed for the whole party to visit the tomb, which was entirely in a different direction from the place she had that morning visited.

She was much surprised and she intended keeping silent; but Bishop Moore, with great simplicity, called out:

"Why, Deborah, where are the evergreens of which you told me? I see none here."

But my aunt unobtrusively retired without giving him any explanation, and, on her return to the mansion, she ascertained that she had wept over the ice-house!

Wisely Directed Ambition.

Hon. Chauncey M. Depew tells the story of his visit to the mechanical department of Cornell University. He found at the head of it Professor Morris, who claimed him as a superior officer, giving as a reason that he was an old-time worker on the New York Central Railroad.

"How did you get here?" said Depew. "I fired on the New York Central. I stood on the footboard as an engineer on the Central. While a locomotive engineer, I made up my mind to get an education. I studied at night, and fitted myself for Union College, running all the time with my locomotive."

"I procured books, and attended, as far as possible, the lectures and recitations. I kept up with my class, and on the day of graduation, I left my locomotive, washed up, put on the gown and cap, delivered my thesis, and received my diploma, put the gown and cap in the closet, put on my working-shirt, got on my engine, and made my usual run that day."

"Then," says Depew, "I knew how he became Professor Morris. That spirit will cause a man to rise anywhere, and in any calling. It is ambition, but it is ambition wisely directed, aiming not at the goal—for such an ambition produces envy, scheming, discontent and weakness—but bravely and cheerfully aiming at oneself, seeking to make oneself fitted for higher work. When this is accomplished, the opportunity for higher work is sure to come."

A Depraved Mule.

There are many amusing stories told illustrating life among the O'J' Dominion darkies, showing their quaint and seemingly unconscious humor. The New York Press adds the following:

A young mule was shipped on a freight train to a farmer in Fauquier County. A tag, bearing the shipping directions, was tied to a rope about his neck. In the course of the journey, hungry, and the mule's natural depravity, tempted him to chew up both tag and rope.

This gave the darky brakeman great concern. He hurried to the caboose and saw the conductor.

"Mars George," he cried, "fo de Lord, whar you 'spects to put off dat colt? He done eat up whar he gwine!"

He Suffered Damage.

Lord Ligonier's death was once erroneously announced in the newspapers and he was eager to prosecute them. His lawyers, however, assured him that he had no case, having suffered no damage.

"There," he said, "you are very much mistaken, for I was going to marry a great fortune, who thought I was but 74. The papers said I was 80 and now she will not have me."

There is no denying a man's love is fiercer than a woman's; this accounts for the fact that it burns out so much quicker.