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A GOOD INVESTMENT. A STORY OF THE GREAT REBELLION.

CHAPTER XV. "Devotion waits the mind above, But heaven itself descends in love." Although Robert Hagan had boasted to Hector that one man was as good as another, every day of his life became more aware that William Damarin was greatly his superior.

At length the avowal came, and the proposal, and though clumsily enough done—a woman or a man in love could have done ten times as well—must be met. They were riding home from church together at the time, and had just turned into the avenue.

Bella remained silent. "Did you hear me?" he gasped, almost inaudibly. "Bella was silent. With an apple twined, carried for a whip, she brushed a portion of her horse's mane the wrong way, then brushed it back again to the right side, then to the wrong side again.

"No, no," he said, "do not speak a word. We know each other now, Bella. Thank you, and thank God!" And he put his arm about her waist and kissed her, which was by every well done on horseback, if the cavalier is adroit—that is to say if he rides on the right side of his mistress—and she is willing.

"But I must speak now, General Damarin." The voice was not Bella's, neither were the words she was about to speak. Utter them not! utter them not! It is folly, perversity, and bitter pride, would use those beautiful lips, warm from their first touch of love.

Robert was in a fit state to be brought under those influences which prevail in a season of religious excitement. Little was needed to mature the dependency he already felt into that condition of ripe despair which dark shadow ex ends into eternity, entailing the despairing soul to a place on the anxious seat, and whose reaction properly directed becomes the religious ecstasy. He was accordingly one of the very first to be influenced.

Mr. and Mrs. Damarin were already in the church. Their son and Bella, though frequently attending on the preaching, did not seem to be touched by it. Probably they were neither gay enough nor sad enough to be effected as they should. But Polly was west ripe for the sickle, and with hanging head and weeping eyes made her way timidly to the front on the very evening when Robert arose and told his "experience." Promoted after this to be an assistant in the good work, it became his duty to question Polly all about her sins, their number and weight, promise consolation to her, stand by and kneel by her, sing and pray for her and with her. And as the attendance of the other members of the family gradually slackened toward the close of the excitement, he and Polly alone together went faithfully every evening to enjoy their newly gotten religion. Polly declared, with tears in her eyes, she had never known happiness before. She loved every step of the way to the church, and the distance was two and a half miles!

Poor Polly! Pretty Polly! His religion was a great consolation to Robert. It strengthened him too. Much as Polly loved her religion, she did not forget other people. She was ready at every opportunity to be out of the way when her brother and Bella might be thereby left alone together. Bella did not like this, and reproved her for it, sometimes softly, but sometimes pretty sharply; though sometimes she did not appear to notice the slipping away at all, or forgot to reprove for it. Mr. and Mrs. Damarin did the same as their daughter. The truth is, they had all set their hearts on the match. But Hektor had not set his upon it; and old Hector was there, and could not be sent away. He was there in capacity of dragon. He was there and here and everywhere—popping up from under the edge of the river-bank, or stepping out from behind a tree in the orchard or road, or approaching the young people in the garden, to offer a flower or fruit, when neither fruit nor flower was wanted—bolting into the dairy and proposing to help his young mistress churn, in the absence of Polly, who usually took turns with her, or when unseen in some near covert, whistling or singing or cleaning knives to make his neighborhood known.

By this time the extravagance of his earnings and manner, despite their earnestness, made her begin to smile. "Why, my good old friend," she said, "if I understand what you are talking about, it is something about which I have not needed your advice. There! you needn't say anything more on the subject. You may go now."

"I isn't a-gwine to go," he persisted. "I mus' talk, an' I's gwine to talk. Nobody cep'n Hector's here for min' boonah, an' I no gwine for to let boonah do no shish wrong ting. Dis yer family is berry good people. But isn't no fuss family. Dey's got land, but dey never hab nary nigger, no time. Dey's workin' people, dey is; dey isn't true an' true gentlemen and ladies like your own. Dey nuber trable wid coach-an'-fo' and two footman an' six outrider, like your ole gran'fader 'b'long's to. Dey neber keep no race boss. Dey no put no t're thousand dollar silver plate on de table, like ole missis 'b'long's to. Dey neber fight no duel. Dey dun't 'spectable, missis; dey's low people."

"Hector! stop talking in that way!" cried Bella in anger. "Don't let me hear you say another word against my friends. They are as good as I am—yes, and as respectable as any body." "Berry well, Miss Bella," he rejoined, in a solemn manner, as if closing one chapter and about opening another. "Now I tell boonah dis one ting; an den I go. Dat night when Mass Ned was shoot, Mass Charles sen' me yer to dis house for to min' boonah. An Mass Charles 'e say, 'Hector, 'e say, 'dat ar yankee abolition officer 'e no count. Moby Miss Bella she want for marry um some day, den you tell Miss Bella, case she marry um, I neber speak to she no mo.' Dem berry word 'e say. Now boonah kin go to wo boonah like. Ole Hector done talk. And shaking his head, he walked solemnly and sulkily out of the room.

CHAPTER XVI. "Mount! mount! and to the road, my men, Right onward is the way; We'll follow to their farthest den The robbers and their prey." Early the next morning Robert and Hector, each with a sack of corn on his shoulder, started on their way across lots to the "out pasture," as a field remote from the house was called, to give the horses kept there their daily feed of grain.

"Hector," said Robert, as they went along, "you haven't told me yet what price I ought to ask for Major. If I sell him, now is as good a time as any; but I don't know that I could beanto part with him, even if anybody would offer me five hundred dollars."

"Five hundred dollars!" exclaimed Hector contemptuously. "Well, he's ready now for talk. Dat boss 'e go in two-thirty-five time last week. I wo a good weicle he kin go in two-thirty, dat for any shish price as a jockey kin, wot know how for cheat properly. But if dat ar homo dunno foteh tre thousand dollar, don't sell um, dat's all—don't sell um."

"Three thousand dollars! Hector, you don't say three thousand dollars?" "Tree thousand dollar; does you yeddy?" Robert let his sack of corn slip to the ground, and, feeling his knees grow weak, sat down upon it. "An' wot will boonah buy wid de money? asked the old man, enjoying the astonishment of the one whose good fortune he had just announced, and which he had in some sort himself created.

Robert needed to think before answering. He thought of a tour in Europe. He thought of buying an interest in a steamboat. He thought of studying for the ministry. He thought of putting up a distillery to make oil and unlimited wealth, as they were proposing to do at Fleming Rock. But whatever castle in the air he built, when he looked toward it to see if Bella was there, he only saw her empty shadow above it, not within.

"Does you yeddy?" said Hector. "Wot will you do wid dat tree thousand dollar, 'posin' you git um?" "I think I'll buy a little farm," Robert answered, not caring to expose to ridicule the plans and specifications of his castle-building. "No, no; don't buy no little farm. Little farm for poor trash. Buy a shop, an' keep it. Wear store close cbery day, an' make you self look dis zackly like a true an' true gentleman. Den all de ladies come to de shop for buyings, an' fall in lub wid de good-lookin' shop-keeper. Den" (confidentially) "boonah kin marry Miss Polly, an' hab big farm. Whah! whah? whah!" And he let his sack fall, and gave his whole body up to laughing, after the manner of his people.

The laughing accomplished, both of them resumed their burdens and approached the pasture fence, over the top of which the horses were already reaching their heads expectantly. Having distributed the corn in the several compartments of a large trough, giving to each just six ears, Hector and Robert both began to look for the tree thousand dollar animal they had just been talking about. "Major was not there!" "He was not in the field. He was gone!" The old man was aghast, and the youth was stunned. His just discovered wealth, his long loved net, his pride, his hope, his tour to Europe, his steamboat, his oil distillery, his pulpit, his shop, his castle in the air, had been stolen in the night. There was no doubt to hang a hope on. Major's well-known hoof-tracks through

"Too late, Misser Robert," said Hector. "Less go back." "Go back if you want to, Hector; but I am going forward." "Now, now, look yer, Misser Robert; way's de use? Major got de start 'n we, an' sure's de Lord we neber catch um." "We can catch him," cried Robert, already in the saddle, and trying to clear his bride from Hector's double grip. "Before he got as far as this Major must have gone thirty miles, and that without any corn, while our horses haven't gone three. Then those tracks are as fresh as if made only a moment ago. Let me go, I say!"

And off he dashed followed by the other, who found it hard work to overtake him. For two hours more they continued to press their steeds without either one saying a word to the other, though the negro would now and then mutter somewhat to himself in his Carolina patois. At the end of that time he recommended his companion to unbuckle one of the bags and eat "some o' Miss Polly's grub." "De Lord bless de sweet ole!" he added, as Robert, though far from being hungry himself, recognized in the request a suggestion that his companion was, and handed him a liberal supply, which he managed to eat while his horse galloped.

Up to this time but three travelers had been encountered; and though each of these was accosted and inquired of, from neither of them was any information obtained. One had been passed by a horseman going at a rapid trot, but the horse was a bay, and not a sorrel. Another had come into the road, and had seen nobody at all. The third, who had traveled a long distance at a slow rate, had met and been passed by so many, he could not recollect whether he had seen any thing answering to the description of Major or not. This one remarked that "them horse-thief gentlemen are sharp enough to dodge out of the way of folks they want to avoid; and that is right easy done in a woody country like this yer."

When Hector had entirely finished his dinner, in eating which he had fallen behind his companion to enjoy a decorous privacy, he wiped his mouth and cheeks, and recovered his place in front. Then he began to look about him. The steep, rough hills among which they had entered soon after leaving Ledberry's Landing had gradually softened into others of more gentle ascent, and the clearings, no longer confined to the narrow creek bottoms, were scattered over slopes and summits as well. The road mounted and descended with an easier grade, and farms of considerable extent came into view. Having observed well the landmarks, the old man turned his attention to the features of Robert, to observe how far the long hard ride had tempered him down to bear a serious expostulation; for the time had come for his friend to make a resolute effort to arrest the dangerous pursuit. Taking advantage of a long ascent which compelled them to walk the horses, he began by calling attention to their fatigued condition, then to the lateness of the hour (though it was not much past noon), then to the badness of the road (though it was really a good deal better than it had been). Finally, turning and looking Robert in the face, he abruptly asked, "Wha' for boonah no shoot?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.] (This story is published by Messrs. Harper & Brothers, N. Y., complete, and will be sent by them to any part of the United States, postage prepaid, on receipt of fifty cents.)

The Centennial. 'Is you gwine down to dat meetin' at de church to-night?' asked Si, when he met Pete at the Kimball House corner. "What meetin' is dat?" "De cents tonyal meetin'." "Is dat some new-fangled kind of pertained meetin' dey's gettin' up round hyar?" asked Pete. "No, you ignorant nigger! Dis hyar is a meetin' about de celebration ob de Fo'th ob July Independence Dec'yration next year at Fillimudely, and dey calls it de cents-tonyal, kase all de nigger isn't suspected to gib mor'n 10 cents to'rds de expenses!" "No, dis nigger ain't gwine, kase dat is some more ob dat ton-foolishness whar dey swindles a nigger on sibil rites, and gits 'em into dese hyar insurreptions! I'd rudder save my time for a prize-box wid a tin bres-pin in it. I would."

Si thought a minute and then said: "I bleeves you's got me on de hip, Pete." And they both went their ways.—Atlanta Constitution.

The Methodist Missionary General Conference have just resolved that the appropriation for 1876 shall be limited to \$675,000. Of this sum \$195,000 is to be appropriated for foreign missions.

Jim Henry said his wife with stony severity, "I saw you coming out of a saloon this afternoon!" "Well, madam," replied the obdurate Jim, "you wouldn't have me stay in there, would you?" "My native city has treated me badly," said a drunken vagabond, "but I love her still." "Probably," replied a gentleman, "her still is all that you do love." Two heads are better than one, from a hatter's point of view.

Bowdlered Democrats.

Chicago Inter-Ocean. General Grant is a terrible thorn in the side of democratic politicians, and nothing that he has done has so sorely perplexed them as his recent message. They seem to stand in helpless despair, not knowing which way to turn. We hardly think that the advice now vouchsafed to the democratic party by the leaders was ever paralleled before. Generally the course for the opposition to pursue has been plain. They had nothing to do but antagonize whatever the republicans proposed. But it has actually come to a point where they dare not do this, and they are extremely wretched about it. It is intensely amusing to watch the efforts of these shrewd old politicians to get around the President's recommendations regarding the public schools, and the taxation of church property. It is rendered still more amusing by the fact that in discussing the proposition they are constantly coming to blows among themselves. For instance, one newspaper opposes the recommendations of the President, and calls upon the democratic party to combat the proposition, because it is an attempt to punish the Roman Catholics. Hardly do we read this before we see in another democratic paper, the World, the following:

"The truth is that the new burdens the President seeks to impose on religious bodies in this country would fall with most force upon his own friends, the Methodists having some \$10,000,000 more of property to be taxed than any other denomination. It would be sad if the exhibition of these facts should induce Bishop Haugen and his two hundred followers to reconsider their recommendation."

The democratic organ in Cincinnati declared last week that the president's plan was an effort to establish a "state religion," while his chronic reviler in Chicago has been moaning over the fact that it was a plan to proscribble all religious bodies and "heathenize" the public schools. In the midst of this, up pops a democratic club in Washington and indorses the presidential proposition, thereby arraying itself against its fellow democrats who were preparing to attack the plan. To make confusion worse confounded, the New York Herald of Friday points out the fact that the proposition of the president is a clever trap to catch democrats, and it warns them not to step into it. It says the only way to avoid not being caught is to turn in and support the plan with all their might and main. The President hopes, it continues, that they will oppose and make war upon his suggestion. If they do, he will have to go before the country. Now, what is a poor, distracted democrat to do? Has it come to this that the only way to beat the republican president is to carry out his recommendations more vigorously than his own party friends can do? Verily, it looks as if the political millennium might be at hand. And let it be marked well, for it is an exceptional occurrence, that the worst that can be said against the president's suggestion is, that he has proposed a plan that will entail a greater burden on his own religious denomination than on any other.

Barrels Made of Paper. It is very probable that paper will soon largely supersede wood as a material for barrels. The paper is made of straw, is very strong, and the barrels, being of a uniform cylinder, can be stowed away without loss of space. No hoops are required, though they are expected. In some recent experiments paper barrels have shown remarkable strength, and resisted heavy inside pressure without bursting. They are not only made water tight, but impervious to air or moisture, saving their contents from being affected by odors in cellars or the holds of vessels. The cylindrical form, also, gives great advantage in handling these barrels, rolling in a straight line, while the stave barrel, from its shape, always rolls into one corner.—Rural New-Yorker.

A Tough Foot. They tell big stories about the tough feet of the Louisiana darkies, but the Vicksburg negro is always ready to compete for the medal. One of them entered a blacksmith shop the other day to sell a horse-shoe, and he placed his foot on a piece of hot iron just out from a bae. It was a full minute before the heat struck in, and then he gave a leap over the anvil, and uttered a terrible yell. The smith asked him to explain, and the darkey responded: "Why, I'ze bin standin' on dat piece ob red-hot iron!" "And you didn't know it?" "No, not zactly; but I smelt smthin' in kinder curus for a good while, but I fought dere was a dead horse around here somewhar!"

The cold weather is at hand; now hover over the stove, and avoid fresh air and exercise, if you would never see spring again.

Omnibuses originated in Paris in 1827. The other kind of buses, which are specially desired by young men and maidens, were discovered some years previously.

It is impolite to say a man has "cheek," say "facultic ars."