

To have hoped and suffered in cheer and woe, To have trusted, betrayed and grieved, To have doubted the things you best might know— This is to have lived.

LAST WEDDING FEE.

Some years ago, when marriage licenses had to be paid for, the Marylanders and Virginians rode across the narrow frontier in the valley and married for nothing in Pennsylvania.

Nobody knew what sect or church Garrick belonged to there, where everybody was his own theologian. He called his church the Zionites and was the only one of it—the Bishop indeed—except his son.

The church building did not exist, though branches of the Zionite body were said to be "further west" by both the bishop and the deacon.

Inquisitive people hinted that there never would have been as many as two Zionites except for the fat marriage fees which were to be had along Mason and Dixon's line and that Bishop Garrick Howton only ordained his son Wesley into the priesthood reluctantly that he might occasionally take some recreation himself and not miss any runaway couples which should arrive between midnight and morning.

All the people far or near understood that the Howtons would marry anybody, the delivery of the certificate being conditional on the payment of the fee; and pains were taken to impress strangers that the Zionites' despise the certificate as a part of the ceremony itself.

A story was started and grew that old Howton married children for the sake of his fees. This story came up from sorrowing and broken-hearted parents in Virginia and from the rich manors and hamlets of Frederick in Maryland.

The bishop was merely a capitalist in marriage fees. This is considered reasonable humility.

Some of the schoolboys called him Old Yoke-fink, because he yoked so many couples.

What education he had picked up avarice and illiterate associations had chased out of his head; like an old country Dutchman, he could spell joints for his barn boys and talk about the breechman on his horse when he meant breeding.

As time advanced Garrick grew deeply in love with Eunice, and forgot to give spiritual restraint to his son.

"At seventeen sharp," old Garrick Howton often repeated to himself, looking at Eunice with the threefold passions of love, avarice and superstition.

Often when an old man falls in love it seems to him like holiness when it is only foolishness. In that way Garrick threw himself back into his natural state before he became an avaricious scoundrel or a self-righteous hypocrite.

It was plain that the hypocritical old gentleman was becoming slightly hysterical. Wesley Howton had been notified by his father that he must go West and establish his own congregation of the peculiar Zionites.

He was sent to the garret to study discipline and thoroughly contemplate the Scriptures. One day Eunice stole up into the garret, while the Bishop was marrying a one-eyed man of sixty to a maid of eighteen, and she met a different scene there from the penance and prayer she had expected.

Wesley was rigged out in a suit of theatrical clothes taken from Eunice's parents' trunks, and was executing a wild and fantastic jig. The Bishop had told Eunice that in the said trunks was the devil's wardrobe. The young people locked the door and examined the wardrobe thoroughly.

What places are garrets for rain and how it drops upon the roof! How it goes pit-a-pat in the heart! How the heart is raining suddenly through the eyes and the roof is beating with the palpitations of the wind!

Old men seldom go to garrets. Bad old men like Garrick Howton never do. Next week Wesley Howton was to start for Indiana and be an apostle on the Wabash.

"You must give me some name," spoke the Bishop as he signed, "although I cannot read by such a light."

"I am ze Marquis Bellsbub," "Bring in the lady!"

Low laughter seemed to be circling around the apartment as the mitting words were said by the bishop's faltering and fatigued tongue. Loud laughter broke from the carriage windows as the scoundrel drove away.

"Here, Wesley! Eunice! Lights! Lights!" exclaimed old Garrick Howton. "I have got my last marriage-fee."

No voice replied; the dark mountains through the windows showed bridal wreaths of stars upon their forbidding brows, like the awful presence of the Marquis who had but now departed with childhood's privity in his false black eyes and wig.

The Bishop took fire and lighted a candle. He saw a paper lying upon the floor with his signature on it. He read with horror that he acknowledged the sale of his soul to Beelzebub for a thousand years.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, "Satan has dropped the contract he entrapped me to sign. To the fire—to the fire with it!"

A voice seemed to sound from the garret on the wailing of the wind. "You signed two such certificates. You have married Eunice to the devil."

"Father," cried Wesley Howton next morning, Eunice is not to be found. Will you forgive me it she has married—if she has married me?"

Bishop Howton lay on the floor dead.—George Alfred Townsend in Baltimore Home Journal.

To Polish a Stained Floor. It seems to be conceded that stained floor should not be wet with much water if they are to preserve their polish.

AFRAID OF THE DARK. My name is Edward Houghton; I am twenty-eight years old, am unmarried, enjoy the best of health and am a government inspector.

My father, Sir George Gillingham of Gillingham Towers, with whom I lived for five years as private tutor to his sons, and who got me my appointment, and Mr. Pallatti, a twelve month ago my nervous dread of the nights I should have to pass in strange inns, when traveling on inspection duty, became so acute and overwhelming that I determined to consult a leading physician about myself.

Sir Alfred Smith listened to my story attentively, asked me a multitude of questions about my health and habits, and especially whether anything ever occurred in very early childhood to give me a shock, although I might have been too young at the time to remember it now.

"Mr. Houghton, I must tell you frankly that I can do nothing for you. The symptoms you have described are distressing, but I cannot tell you as a physician how they originate or suggest any way of alleviating them. I have a friend, however, who is a profound believer in animal magnetism, and although I am very skeptical about many of his theories, he is one of the cleverest and most agreeable men I know.

I found Mr. Pallatti the next afternoon lounging over a book in a large, luxuriously furnished room crowded with pictures, curious and pretty things—a handsome young gentleman, perfectly dressed, with a pair of eyes which, if they could not see through a microscope, looked as if they could pierce a human being through and through.

After a little indifferent conversation I began to tell him my tale, but I was so nervous that I bungled woefully and interspersed my narrative with idiotic giggles.

"Wait a bit, Mr. Houghton; there's no hurry," said Mr. Pallatti, bringing me a glass of wine from a side table; you are my patient, you know, and you must drink this before beginning a long story.

Chicago Herald: Mrs. Cleveland abominates cigarettes. The smoke from one of these powerful little tinkers made its way from the smoking car in which she was returning from Philadelphia to Washington the other day and annoyed her to such a degree that she mentioned the matter to the conductor.

Wood carving is one of the newest feminine fads. The passion for carved hall and dining room furniture and for wood over mantels has something to do with the craze. The tools are easily handled and require little muscular strength, but a quick eye, an artistic feeling and a steady hand.

Fred Nye, in explaining his candidacy for the council, says: "I am not feeling very well this afternoon, owing to my head. Certain reckless enemies had been charging that if I were elected I would favor closing the saloons; last evening, during the hours from 9 to 4, I demonstrated the contrary to be true. I consider the saloon a palladium of our liberties, and I wish to say right here that any bills which I have contracted in pursuit of pleasure will be paid by the city treasurer before I get through with him."

wish to repudiate some of the main facts. "In the year 1745 my great-grandfather, Sir Hugo Gillingham, after being many years a widower, married a young and beautiful girl and brought her to the Towers.

"The girl was faithless to him—faithless from the very day she was wed, and her lover was her own husband's vagabond, worthless cousin, the son of a man who had squandered his birthright and willingly parted with all the great estates of Gillingham to his younger brother and heirs forever.

"One night," continued Sir George, "Sir Hugo returned home earlier than he was expected, and, walking hastily up stairs, the first thing he heard was the voice of his wife in conversation with a stranger on one of the rooms. He tried the door; it was locked, and by the time he had burst it open a man was leaping out of the open window. Sir Hugo dashed after him, and after half a dozen passes, drove his sword through the body of Conrad Gillingham. Returning through the window he found his wife senseless on the floor, and putting a constraint upon himself to refrain from spurning her with his foot, he passed on to his chamber, where the first thing that met his eye was a great iron chest with the lid open, while a very short examination showed that his precious title deeds had been abstracted. He found his way back to where Conrad lay with staring eyes in the moonlight and searched the body for the deeds without success. Returning through the window, his wife sat up and looked at him and his blood-stained hands, but her face was the face of a maniac, and she never recovered her reason, dying many years afterwards within the walls of a madhouse.

"He saw the whole devilish plot now, Conrad Gillingham, using his wife as his tool, had intended to abstract the deeds, and with these in his possession to attain him of high treason and claim the estates. "There was a state trial, which any one can read to this day, and he was acquitted, with a universal expression of pity for his misfortune and of loathing for the subject of his vengeance.

"To piece together these facts had cost me months of labor in reading through old diaries and letters in the muniment room, for I have never felt sure whether some day or other I or some of my descendants might not be challenged to produce the title deeds of Gillingham. The blow has fallen upon me at last. It seems that some descendants of that old collateral branch, all long since dead and gone, as I hoped and believed, have turned up. At any rate there are agents busily at work making all manner of inquiries, searching registers and so on, and my lawyers have told me point blank that I may be called upon to produce these deeds and that if they are not forthcoming my tenure of Gillingham Towers may be in jeopardy. Unless you, my dear young friends, with your keen eyes and ready invention can help me my resources are at an end."

He turned and rang the bell, and then leaned his head upon his hand, his elbow on the mantelpiece. A servant entered, and looking up he said quite naturally, "Put out all these lights and close the room, Mallam—I only wanted to show Mr. Pallatti how it looks on a state occasion—and take the cigars and things into the billiard room. We will finish the evening there."

"Most extraordinary!" exclaimed Sir George. "Do you mean to say you found it out yourself?" "Yes," returned Pallatti, "the first time I went. There never has been and never will be a trick of any kind that I am unable to unravel. I suppose it is a kind of gift, but I have never made any use of it except sometimes to have a little fun among the spiritualists." And he gave me a peculiar look out of his black eyes.

"Exposing all their rascally fortune telling and rapping and table turning and such knaveries, I suppose," I observed composedly. "Quite so," replied Pallatti dryly. "And now, gentlemen," said George as the last bottle of claret was emptied, and we were ashamed even to look as if we should like some more, "if you please we will take our coffee in the drawing room as there are no ladies there, and he arose from the table and walked towards the door. As we followed, Pallatti whispered in my ear, "Mr. Houghton, I should like to be a modern Clarence and be drowned in a hundred dozen of that claret!"

To my surprise Sir George led the way to the great state drawing room, and as we entered a perfect blaze of splendor was before us. The huge saloon, with its frescoed ceilings and profuse gilding, was lighted up by hundreds of wax candles in great lustres; the wall was entirely covered by full-length portraits of old Gillinghams, over each portrait a powerful lamp and reflector threw so strong a light that every gallant knight and gentle dame seemed to have come to life and be gazing at the black-coated intruders into their gay assembly. Two enormous fires were burning, one at each end of the room, and before one of these Sir George stood and motioned us to be seated. He looked so grand and stately and the brilliance of the scene was so over-powering that Pallatti and I listened for his words with a kind of awe.

"Gentlemen, I am not going to detain you for any length by telling you over again the history which you both have heard already from my lips. But on this particular night I

leaped out, the woman thrust the papers into her dress, and a second man with a flashing sword in his hands dashed into the room and through the window in pursuit of the fugitive. Then the woman drew out the papers and tried to tear them, but they must have been parchment, and she failed; she put them over the flame of the candle, but one corner only began to shrivel and they would not burn. At last she turned to one of the dirty prints, which opened at her touch, thrust the document into a cavity in the wall, and reclosing the aperture fell headlong to the ground. I could not have borne much more, when there was a glare of light in my eyes, a hand shook me roughly by the shoulder, and a voice (Pallatti's) exclaimed, "Good Heaven! Houghton, what is the matter? You must have had the nightmare you look quite exhausted."

"The year 1745 brought ruin and misery on many a noble house, and Sir Hugo did his best to involve himself in the same fate. Gentlemen, it is a fact that that poor scoundrel, the pretender, once sat in that travesty of a throne, while well born, virtuous ladies crowded round to kiss his false hand," and Sir George pointed to a chair surmounted by a kind of canopy and crimson.

"One night," continued Sir George, "Sir Hugo returned home earlier than he was expected, and, walking hastily up stairs, the first thing he heard was the voice of his wife in conversation with a stranger on one of the rooms. He tried the door; it was locked, and by the time he had burst it open a man was leaping out of the open window. Sir Hugo dashed after him, and after half a dozen passes, drove his sword through the body of Conrad Gillingham. Returning through the window he found his wife senseless on the floor, and putting a constraint upon himself to refrain from spurning her with his foot, he passed on to his chamber, where the first thing that met his eye was a great iron chest with the lid open, while a very short examination showed that his precious title deeds had been abstracted. He found his way back to where Conrad lay with staring eyes in the moonlight and searched the body for the deeds without success. Returning through the window, his wife sat up and looked at him and his blood-stained hands, but her face was the face of a maniac, and she never recovered her reason, dying many years afterwards within the walls of a madhouse.

"Eureka! Eureka!" he almost screamed; "I ought to have seen it at a glance! Come back, both of you; we shall know all about it in five minutes."

The usually calm and impassive Mr. Pallatti was in such a violent state of excitement that we almost feared for his reason, but we obeyed him and returned upon our steps. Without hesitation he went straight into a room called the best bed chamber, in one corner of which there still stood the great iron chest from which the fatal title-deeds had been abstracted, and taking a foot rule he measured the chest carefully, measured the wall on one side of the door—nine feet.

Then he came out into the corridor, which was paneled throughout with dark oak from floor to ceiling, and, measuring off nine feet from the side of the door on the outside, marked the place with a deep score of his knife. Transferring his attention to the next room (known as the blue bed chamber) he measured off seven feet. His discovery was patent enough. Again applying his rule to the space between the two scores it was at once seen that there was seven feet of wall unaccounted for.

"There is a carpenter at work close by," panted Pallatti; "we saw him as we came up. Run, my dear Houghton, and bring him here with his tools."

I was off like a shot, and soon returned with the astounded carpenter, who has been shedding gimlets, bradaws, nails and screws, and such small articles plentifully by the wayside out of his pocket in his haste. Pallatti had looked at the work, and the wainscot; the rusty nails gave way at the first wrench, and the planks were removed, the carpenter was dismissed, and then, with an almost indescribable feeling of awe, we stood within the very room I knew so well. The stuffed birds, the crazy furniture, the dingy prints—all were there, and on the little table in the center stood a tall and tarnished silver candlestick, the candle long since devoured by the great-grandfathers of the men who scampered into their holes as we entered.

For two or three minutes not a word was said, and then I sprang at one of the prints and tried to tear it from the wall, but Pallatti stayed my hand.

"There is not a secret spring in the world could baffle me for two minutes," he said quietly. With one touch of his fingers the picture flew open, and putting in his hand he pulled out a mass of crumpled parchment. A short inspection proved to Sir George that they were the long lost deeds, and we all saw for ourselves that one corner was shriveled and stained with grease and smoke.