The Cambridge Chronicle.

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NEW SERIES—VOL. 8. CAMBRIDGE, MD.—SATURDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 6, 1845. NUMBER 50

TERMS.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY MORNING

At two Dollars and Fifty cents per annum, payable half yearly in advance. No subscription will be received for a shorter period than six months, and no paper discontinued until all arrears are paid.

ADVERTISEMENTS inserted on the usual terms, and where the number of insertions is not limited, they will be continued until direction to omit them is received, and charged accordingly.

POETRY.

"ALL IS VANITY."

Oh! I have seen a bubble blown,
In beauty on a billow bright,
Around it lovely landscapes shone,
And pictured forms of life and light—
An earthly Heav'n was painted there,
The field, the forest, and the lawn—
But as I grasp'd—it burst in air,
The mimic world of light was gone.

And such is Pleasure—we pursue,
As does the child the butterfly—
'Tis charming to the distant view,
But as we grasp, its glories die—
'Tis crush'd the moment that we catch
The gaudy phantom of the mind,
And disappointed man, a wretch,
An aching void can only find.

Oh! I have sought frail pleasure long,
In empty fame and glittering gold—
Ive listen'd to her Syren song,
As did Ulysses' men of old—
Yes, for one glimpse of glory, I
Have of my heart's best wishes given—
And for one glance of her dark eye,
Have barter'd ev'n my hopes of Heav'n.

I've sought the phantom pleasure too,
In the heart's hell, the mad'ning bowl—
I drank, tho' I beheld in view,
The wreck and ruin of the soul;
When in my soul the serpent shed
The venom of his victory,
With Solomon of old I said—
All, all, indeed, is vanity.

What will it profit, if we gain
A world of wealth and lose the soul?
And what is glory to the slain?
Where are the blessings of the bowl?
The proudest potentate must fall,
Earth's sweetest pleasures quickly flee—
One hour of virtue's worth them all,
For all indeed is vanity.

FRANK MANLY.

"Honor and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."—POPE.

Frank, do not be discouraged," said Squire Rockwell to his young friend, Frank Manly, whose desponding tone, as they stood conversing on the levee, had induced the kind old man to make inquiries about his circumstances and his prospects, which he found to be indeed any thing but flattering.

"I *am* discouraged, Mr. Rockwell," answered Frank; "who would not be discouraged, situated as I am? Time and money have I expended in preparing myself for my profession;—night after night have I bent over musty tomes; and what has it availed me?—I have been deceiving myself, Mr. Rockwell. I might have known that I could not succeed; for had I not been blind, wiltully blind, I must have seen that the professions were overstocked. Had I learned a trade, I would, at least, have been able to support my poor old mother in respectability, but now I am only a burden to her."

"But, my young friend," said Mr. Rockwell, "you will gain nothing by indulging such desponding thoughts You have a strong frame and stout limbs, and, while God is pleased to continue to you these blessings, you need not shrink from any difficulty. If your professional prospects are truly as you represent them, I would advise you to apply yourself to something else. To regret the loss of time or money will not remedy present evils; such regrets are useless, childish. You may have been unfortunate in not having learned some mechanical art; but do not let that depress you. If you are willing to employ yourself, you need not fear but that you will find plenty to do. It is better to be an honest laborer, than a sneaking, pettifogging lawyer. Do not be offended at me, Frank; I may speak bluntly, but I mean kindly."

"But it is hard, Mr. Rockwell," said Frank, "after having spent years in preparing myself for a profession, to give up all—lose the money I have expended and the precious time I have consumed."

"It perhaps does seem hard," said Mr. Rockwell, "but it is better that than to go on consuming more of that time which is so precious, and spending more money with so precarious a means of support. And it does not follow that you must for ever abandon your profession, and the hope of rising in it; a more favorable opening may offer at a future period."

"And I must descend, too, from the position I have hitherto occupied in society, and bear with a supercilious nod—a cold recognition—from those with whom I have moved on an equality."

"Yes; the heartless and frivolous—the devotees of fashion—will perhaps *cut* your acquaintance, but, depend upon it, the really worthy and sensible will admire you for your manly independence, and respect you more."

"But what can I do?"

"You can do many things. But your own judgment will best direct you in choosing an employment. If you do not relish labor, you might soon get a clerkship, and that will not compromise your position in society."

"No, no—not that."

"Well, then, at the factories—"

"Ah, the *factories!*"

"Yes, Frank; you can get such employment there as will not be overly heavy, and yet be lucrative.—You must conquer your pride, my young friend, and resolve to do what your judgment approves, and, my word for it, you will do right."

"Well, I will think of what you have said."

"Do so, my friend; I will see you again shortly—in the mean time adieu."

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"Ellen, Jane, Maria—do come to the window! It can't be possible—and yet, it must be—it is himself."

"Who, Alice?"

"Frank Manly."

"Well, there's nothing strange in that, is there?"

"Yes, but there is."

"Where is he?"

"There."

"Why I see no one but Mr. Herbert—except it be your cart-man."

"That's it."

"What?"

"Your cart-man is Frank Manly."

"Impossible!"

Mr. Rockwell, in whose house this conversation occurred, rose quickly and approached the window. It was true; there was Frank Manly, not exactly in the capacity of a cart-man, as the young lady had expressed it, but superintending the loading of a quantity of metal, occasionally laying a hand to himself, and directing the operations of the workmen. A short smock of blue check was drawn over his person and confined round the waist with a hempen cord, otherwise he was dressed in his usual style. Mr. Rockwell regarded him for a moment with a smile of approbation; then turning round to one of the young ladies he said, "And why did you say impossible?"

"Because I would not have believed that Frank would so degrade himself."

"I can see nothing degrading, Miss Templeton," said Mr. Rockwell, gravely, "nothing degrading in the simple fact of wearing a cartman's frock, and following an honest calling."

"But what does it all mean, dear Mr. Rockwell?" said Miss Templeton.

"It means," said Mr. Rockwell, "that Frank Manly has too proud a spirit to consent to be a drone in society. He found that he could not support himself by his profession, and he determined, like a noble fellow as he is, with his own two hands to earn a livelihood, rather than eat the bread of dependence."

Mr. Rockwell then related the conversation he had had with Mr. Manly, and the advice he had given.—As he concluded, Frank turned, and observing his friends, bowed in recognition. Squire Rockwell and his daughter Alice returned his salutation with a cordial smile, but the three young ladies deigned not to notice him, and turned away with a contemptuous laugh. Mr. Rockwell noticed the action and said:

"My dear young ladies I am sorry to see you display the spirit which you have. You have imbibed altogether a false notion of gentility. I will not argue with you, but I tell you that the time will come when the most imperious beauty in the city may be proud to win a smile from Frank Manly."

Mr. Rockwell said no more, but soon after retired, leaving the young ladies to discuss the subject by themselves.

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Frank Manly was a young man of good abilities, fine address, and a handsome person. His father, an extensive wholesale dealer, died when Frank was about fifteen years of age, leaving his affairs in a very embarrassed state, and after many tedious delays in the settlement of the estate, the widow finally found herself with only a small annuity, barely sufficient, with rigid economy, to support herself and son. For herself, she did not repine, but for that son's sake, and on his account alone, she was grieved. The darling wish of her heart was, to see him rank high in the world's esteem, and to take his place among those gifted minds which have adorned our country's annals—for, with a mothers fond partiality, she imagined him possessed of all the highest qualifications of human nature.—She sacrificed her comforts—and even necessaries,—to obtain the means to give him an education. And Frank was not unmindful of his mother's sacrifices; he applied himself diligently, and mastered his studies with surprising ease. At the age of twenty, he graduated, and commenced the study of the law, with an eminent barrister, with whom he continued two years, when he passed his examination with credit and was admitted to practice. Frank looked forward, now, to a career of honor and usefulness, and his sanguine temperament pictured in the dim future only scenes of triumph. But it was not long before he began to find the reality was not so charming as he had fancied it. His attendance at his office was unremitting, but, alas! there came no clients. Men cared not to trust the young practitioner, when there were older and more experienced advocates to be had. I need not go on to describe the unvarying monotony of the twelve month that followed his admission to the bar. It is but a repetition of the experience of thousands of young men of our country, who have foolishly cast themselves away upon a profession, and drag on a miserable existence, vibrating between hopes and fears; wearing the weary days along with murmurings and repinings. But Frank was different in one thing from this class; he was not one who would always go on repining, and hoping, and fearing, for he had a strong spirit and no common intellect. He had brooded gloomily over his situation without coming to any definite conclusion, until the conversation with Squire Rockwell, which is recorded in the opening of our story. That conversation had made a deep impression upon him, and when he was left alone he retired to his office, and sat down to consider the matter seriously. The result of his reflections was, that he determined to take the advice of his friend. He knew he would have to forfeit the society of the fashionable in which he had moved; that he would have to bear the cold sneers of many, who, until now, had sought his companionship, but he had formed his resolution, and these considerations could not deter him. His mother, too, when he informed her of his resolution, tried to persuade him to renounce the idea; but when he clearly explained to her the hopelessness of waiting longer for practice, and the misery of such a life of anxiety, she was a woman of too much good sense not to see that he was right, and she offered no further impediment,—though it seemed to her the death blow to all her sanguine hopes on his account.

The same day Frank made an engagement with an extensive iron manufacturer, and entered at once upon his duties.

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The insulting laugh and cutting manner of the young ladies at Mr. Rockwell's dwelling had not escaped the observation of Frank Manly. A bitter smile was upon his countenance as he cast one hasty look behind, before turning into another street. Frank loved Maria Templeton, and he had had every reason to believe that she regarded him with favor. The blow was doubly severe, inflicted by her hands.

"I could not have thought," he murmured, "that *she* would be the first to thrust me down ward. Have I been deceived in her character? I know not. I had pictured to myself Maria Templeton as being all heart! She pretended not to see me. Ah, well! How different was Alice Rockwell!"

This was but the beginning of trials, but the blow fell perhaps the heavier and was more severely felt, because of the hand that inflicted it.—Such slights were of daily occurrence. But Frank had an indomitable spirit; trials, and difficulties, and disappointments could not arrest the purposes which, after due deliberation, he had formed in his soul. The coldness and neglect of his former companions only nerved him more firmly to the accomplishment of his duties.

Several months thus passed. He had once sought to see Miss Templeton, but had been repulsed, and then, convinced of her fickleness and selfishness, he only sought to banish her image from his heart.—There was one circumstance which, probably, assisted much in promoting this object. He visited frequently at Squire Rockwell's, where a kindly welcome always awaited him, and in the society of the old man's daughter, he passed many delightful evenings. Alice was almost the only young lady of his former acquaintance who received him with the same cordiality as formerly. Insensibly she began to usurp that place in his affections which Miss Templeton had formerly filled.

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A year had now elapsed since Frank Manley entered upon his new occupation. His diligence and integrity had won for him the good opinion of his employer, and his salary, at the end of six months, had been doubled. He could now support himself in comfort, and still lay by a portion of his earnings for his mother's use. If he ever regretted the change he was forced to make in his habits, he had at least the satisfaction of having a good conscience.

"I have a proposition to make to you," said Mr. Rockwell, as one day he met Frank; "will you call at my house this evening?"

Frank promised to do so; and accordingly waited upon him at an early hour.

"You may remember," said Mr. Rockwell, after the usual compliments had been passed, "that when I advised you to apply yourself to some other employment, I told you that it was not necessary that you should forever abandon your profession."

"I remember, and I did cherish a hope that it might be so; but latterly I have banished the idea from my mind, and learned to be content with my lot. It was vain to indulge such a hope."

"Not so. And I imagine the time has arrived when you may return and take up your true position. I have a suit pending which involves half of my fortune. I intend to put it into your hands."

Frank would fain have persuaded his kind friend to alter his resolution, doubting his ability to conduct so important a case; but Mr. Rockwell insisting, it was finally arragged that he should undertake it.

The suit was one which had excited much speculation, as the interests involved were considerable. Eminent counsel was employed by the opposing party, and all things seemed to indicate that the case would be decided against Mr. Rockwell.

The day of trial at length arrived. Frank had prepared himself thoroughly, and did not despair of success, though he failed not to notice the air, half contemptuous, with which the counsel on the opposite side regarded him when he appeared for his client.

We need not describe the minutiæ of the trial, which lasted two days—suffice it to say that a verdict was rendered in favor of his client, Mr. Rockwell.—It was a triumph indeed! Congratulations were showered upon him. Those who had before looked upon him as beneath their notice, were now eager to make his acquaintance, and cultivate his friendship. He once more opened an office, and business poured in upon him. He was a made man, to use a common but expressive prase. He was again courted by the circles in which he had formerly moved, and Maria Templeton too would fain have attached him to herself again, and she put in play all her arts to that effect, but in vain. The charm had been broken, and other attractions rendered all her arts harmless.

A notice which appeared in the —— Gazette a few months subsequent may explain the nature of those attractions. It ran somewhat after this fashion:

MARRIED—On the — inst. Frank Manley, Esq. to Miss Alice Rockwell, daughter of the Hon. Thomas Rockwell, all of this city.

FLIRTING WITH THE LADIES.

A STORY WITH A MORAL.

"It will never do, Jedediah," said my uncle Obed Allen to my youngest brother, "it will never do—this flirting with all the young girls, and trifling with their guileless affections!"

My brother Jedediah was a handsome young fellow. He had a fine person, when his Sunday clothes were on—a clear, black eye, and red cheeks. He wore a pair of whiskers at eighteen. During his vacations our village girls were all in a tumult: all were anxious to have the honor of his attentions—and many an eye has closed, with a tear under its lid, after waiting the whole evening at the window, with the expectation of seeing Jedediah ride up to the horse-block. He saw their sly glances at him, as he stood of a Sunday in the gallery at church, & led the choir. He know that they thought him handsome—that he was admired, and he was fool enough to be flattered by such things. His vanity grew at last to be his ruling passion: and he thought the party tedious where all the eyes in the room were not directed towards him.

He spent his vacations wholly with the girls: riding with one, walking with another, and "setting up" with another. He made declaration in a garland of flowers, and expressed his adoration to every bright eye in the village with a bouquet of the sweetest and freshest rosebuds he could gather. As long as their admiration had the charm of novelty, he was all devotion; but when that was gone, he flew away, like a surfeited bee, to some fresher flower.

At the time Obed addressed him as I have stated, we were sitting at the breakfast table. Jedediah had just returned from a walk among the hills with Isabel Johnson, one of the sweetest girls of our village. As he came into the room, he snapt the dew out of his whiskers with high glee, and sung out at the top of his voice:

"I say, Absalom, that Bell Johnson is not to be sneezed at of a damp day. She's a real cauliflower! What a foot she's got! Didst ever see her dance, uncle Obed? You'd think her the shadow of a gossamer, she's so light. Ah, Absalom; my boy, such a tramp as we have had! Such flowers as we gathered!—Faith, every time she trod her little hoof upon the violets, there came up such a cloud of perfume, you would have thought Madam Flora was lighting up every one of her incense burning altars. We stopped awhile upon the brink of the ledge on old Chesnut Hill, and looked down upon the water as it tumbled over the mill-dam. Bell gazed at it, as if she saw ten thousand little naiads dancing minutes upon the bubbles. While she was looking, I took her little paw, so—then I squeezed it gently, so—and whispered in her ear, so. But, uncle Obed, *mum's* the word—Bell and I know who's who."

It was then uncle Obed spoke. "It won't do, Jedediah," said he and his voice chocked with emotion as he spoke; "it won't do, I say! All this may be strawberries and cream' to such a crazy pate as yours. It may be fun to win the heart of such an innocent thing as Bell Johnson, just to throw it away again, like a worthless orange, after you have squeezed all the juice out. But, mark my words, Jedediah. I have seen more days than you, and observed somewhat of the ways by which Providence brings its righteous ends about. Justice is sure of foot, Jedediah, though slow—mark that. And for every idle word and deed of yours, there will be a day of account here or elsewhere. It is true I have seen some precious scoundrels in my day, die quietly in their beds, who deserved to die at the end of the halter. And the preachers says, 'there is one event to all, both the righteous and the wicked.' But, observe, my pretty fellow, I never knew a graceless rougue that trifled with a woman's affections, who did not, ever after, find a bitter curse in his cup.—Judgment follows hard upon such misdeeds. I believe there is a special woe denounced upon the wretch—and he might as well attempt to fly into the regions of infinite space, as to try to escape it.

"Leave off these wicked ways, then, Jedediah, if you would prosper—you would live, to lie down without dreaming of fire and brimstone, or would die without hearing the wail of a broken hearted one knelling in your ears. But let this motto be your guide when you go among the sweet innocent flowers whom God has raished up here:

"*Never excite expectations you do not intend to gratify.*"

Here uncle Obed's voice grew husky. He look a long and deep draught from his mug of cider, and then rose from the table and walked out of the room.

As he closed the door behind him, Jedediah drew a long breath, looked at me half mad and half ashamed, and then contemptuously whistled—*whew.*

My foolish brother continued to flirt with Isabel, until her whole being was locked up in his. Her friends cautioned her in vain—she was blind to the suggestions even of her better judgment. At length, when he had completely triumphed over her gentle heart, he left her, and sought some other sweet flower to blight, as he had done this.

Isabel bore his coldness awhile with apparent indifference. But the lustre gradully left her eye, her cheeks grew pale and her fine red lips to a death-like purple hue. She complained to none. She murmured nothing against him. Her friends observed that she mingled more with the pious, and less with the gay.—It was evident, however, that the machinery of her existence was gradually running down; and every day was expected to bring some story of her sickness or death. At length she almost shunned society, and spent her time, when the weather would permit, in wandering among the hills and forests.

One evening, of a pleasant day which she had spent away from home in this manner, her parents observed that she did not return at her usual hour. They became alarmed, and rousing a party of their neighbors, they went in pursuit of her. They traveled the forest and thicket for a long while in vain. They shouted her name through the deep glens, and blew their horn from the top of the hills. But echo alone replied.

At length, about midnight, one of the party, on his return, discovered her on the edge of a high ledge of rocks, seated at the foot of an old beach, which hung far above the precipice. He called on her as soon as he discovered her. She returned no answer. He thought she might be asleep, and he clambered up the rocks to where she sat. He called again, and louder, but she answered not. Then he touched her shoulder and gently shook her, and started back with horror.—*She was dead*—cold and stiff; though, as she sat, she looked more like one enjoying a quiet slumber. Her left arm rested on the trunk of the tree, and the fingers of her right hand were laid upon the letters of my brother's name, cut in the smooth bark. It seemed as if she had been trying to trace them out in the dark.—Doubtless such was the fact, and that her broken spirit had passed away while busied in this strange but natural effort.

She was buried in the village church yard the next day without any parade. But the story of her life and death became one of the traditions of the place, and the stranger may hear it told by any one of the villagers, should he chance to task whose neat white monument it is which stands in the corner of the yard, with a strangely quaint device sculptured upon it. Our school-master had been a rejected lover of Isabel's, and he procured the artist who executed the monument to grave upon it an emblem of his own devising. It consisted simply of her name, in beautiful German capitals, under which there was a drooping lily, in full bloom, around whose stock a small adder had coiled himself, his head thrust into the cup of the flower, as if he was sucking away the life juice of the lovely plant. This was her only epitaph. No one who knew her story could be at a loss as to the design.

My brother was absent when she died. When he returned and heard the story of her death, he showed some signs of emotion. For several days he kept aloof from society; you could read remorse in his eye, and at times there was a twitching of the muscles of his face, as if he felt the gnawing of "the worm which never dies."

But it soon wore off, and he became as gay as ever. He mingled with his usual lightness in all the frolics of the village. He smiled as sweetly as ever upon our *belles*, and alas, poor human nature, they returned them as sweetly as ever.

I must confess that I thought sometimes of my uncle Obed's warnings, and looked for some dreadful fulfilment of the deceiver's curse. I felt a foreboding that a judgment would come. It did come.

After he had graduated he studied law and established himself in an adjoining county, in his profession.—He had fine talents for the bar, and rose rapidly in the esteem of the public. Several years rolled away, and at the age of twenty nine he found himself wealthy, and of high reputation. He still remained, however, as reckless and wild in his intercourse with society, mingling in all is gayest circles.

In the winter of his 29th year he caught a dreadful cold, while on a sleigh ride, which made great inroads upon his health, and brought on symptoms of consumption. His physicians told him that he could not survive the rigors of another New England winter, and recommended a voyage to Cuba. I went with him as his nurse, and the following winter we spent in Havana. Here he rapidly regained his health, and as he spoke Spanish as fluently as a Castilian, he mingled a great deal with the Spaniards. His fine person and fascinating manners soon found him a passport to the favor of many a black-eyed donna. He seemed perfectly happy while basking in the sunshine of their smiles. But alas, poor fellow, slow-footed justice was about to overtake him.

On some great occasion the Governor General gave a splendid ball at this place. We were both invited.—I was satisfied with looking on the gay scene, but he mingled in all its luxuries.

I observed that he waltzed several times with the beautiful wife of a young Spanish officer of high rank. The last time he handed her a seat he plucked her a moss rose-bud from a vase, which stood near him, and dropped it into her bosom. Here he stopped and whispered something in her ear, and when she raised her head, I observed that a deep blush was passing over her face, and a smile of peculiar meaning curling her lips. He forgot that the eye of Spanish jealousy knews neither slumber or sleep.

Two days afterwards he was found by the city guard, about daylight, on the pavement in front of this Spaniard's house; a broken guitar lying beside him, and the Spanish dirk sticking in each side, both thrust quite through his heart. * * * * * *

I was at no loss to guess whose hand directed the blow. But I thought of Bell Johnson and Obed's warning, and felt that the Spaniard was but an instrument, raised up by ONE who has said "vengeance is mine!"

The sentence was just, and I did not murmur.

It is more than twenty years since these events occurred. But they are as if they occurred but yesterday; and now when I see a gifted young man, flirting with the gentle feelings of a lovely girl, a sight too often seen in those degenerate days, I think of Jedediah, and I feel tempted to say to him, in the words of my uncle Obed—"Beware how you excite expectations you do not mean to gratify."