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THE LOST CHILD.

A THRILLING STORY.

"A child is lost!" was the fearful and pulse-stilling rumor that coursed like wild fire throughout one of those small settlements which occasionally skirt the entrance to our American forests. A cry like this, was enough to thrust the warm blood back to the heart with the chill of horror to arrest the throb of joy, even in its gayest humors; and to send the busy imagination forth with the little wanderer in the deep solitude of the forest; whom it pictured, seeking in vain to discover some opening while he wiped away the tears that were flowing over his young face like rain; holding himself in an attitude to listen, till his startled fancy brought back the growl of some hideous inhabitant of those dark places; then, running onward, would either fall a prey to the very fate he was endeavoring to flee from; or, after threading the same little circle, till overpowered his feeble limbs lay himself down, despairingly, to die.—Such tragedies had been acted; and the sons of the forest well knew that it is easier to pursue their course through the trackless ocean without a compass, than than to ascertain their pathway in those deep wilds, where the light of the sun is almost excluded, and no footprint guides to human habitations.

In the present instance men crowded together scarcely daring to whisper to their own souls that the sweet child of Agnes Wade was lost. 'He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow!' Can there be a more pathetic appeal to the sensibilities of human nature? Can there be a picture of more utter desolation than the heart of the bereaved one under such circumstances? Agnes Wade was the idol of the settlement. She had been in it but a few fleeting months; yet there had been time enough for her memory and her interests to find a resting place in every bosom.—She had come there to reside, with the parents of her lost husband. They were in humble life, but it needed only to look at Agnes, to know that she had been educated in refinement, if not in elegance. And she had borne the change of circumstances with so much sweet and pious resignation; she was so gentle, so condescending, so benevolent, that it was impossible to be with her and not to love her. She always had a word of encouragement for the timid; she always whispered consolation to the sorrowful; that consolation which cometh only from above. With irresistible persuasion she endeavored to reclaim the vicious, and lead the contrite spirit to 'the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.'

Agnes Wade was young. She had married the husband of her affections; one to whom her fond vows of constancy had been yielded almost in childhood.—His parents had labored hard to give him an education; and it was during his college years that he saw and loved the delicate and attractive Agnes. Their hearts as it were, melted into one. The opinions and feelings of William Wade were reflected on the mind and soul of his sweet betrothed one; and when they wedded it was only to make the blending of interests and emotions more closely intimate. But happiness so perfect cannot abide long in a world which has been blasted by the frown of its Creator. Dreams that are so delightful, must have a sudden, if not a fearful, waking. Two years had passed since Agnes had felt all the desolation and all the misery, which is comprised in that one word—widow. She had known sorrow before in the loss of her youngest born: but it was as the few drops which precede the torrent. She committed its body to the dust in the sure hope that its spirit was even at that moment mingling in kindred holiness and happiness with the blessed in Heaven; that it was a bright angel around the throne of God; and it was a thought full of beauty, and full of consolation, that she had been the honored instrument of adding one to those pure spirits, who dwell in the blissful presence of their Redeemer. But when the grave closed over him, who had been her guardian, her counsellor, her support; who had shared her joys, and soothed her sorrows, who had been her companion in health, and pillowed her head in sickness; she felt as if shut out from the loveliness of life forever; and she would willingly have laid her throbbing temples and despairing heart on the cold earth beside him, never more to rise.

Agnes was left without fortune, but she contrived, by economy and industry to keep herself from absolute dependance and was always able to bestow the widow's mite in charity. She treated her son as a companion—he was associated in her visits of benevolence—he shared in her labors with all the strength and ingenuity his young days could furnish.

It was this darling son—this fair pledge of her young affections—that was now nowhere to be found. It was a bright day in spring and Agnes had risen with the sun, and gone several miles to visit a dying friend. On this occasion she left her little dear Will behind, contenting herself with imprinting a mother's kiss upon his glowing cheek. as he lay wrapped in slumber. 'Is he not the sweetest of all sweet children?' thought she as she turned to look once more upon his sleeping loveliness. 'Oh, if I were bereft of him, too, I should have nothing left to live for!'

The hours and the moments sped away until the time arrived when Agnes was expected. Ah who shall be the first to tell her of these heavy tidings? All shrunk from the task She came—yes, they could not help her coming!—and there they sa', crowded together in a little circle, as children press together when they are listening to something frightful—all eyes turned upon her with sad and fearful meaning; but not a word was uttered.

'What is the matter?' she quickly asked—'Where is my child?—Something dreadful has occurred!—Oh, tell me!—where is my child?—Father!—Mother?—Will you not speak to me? Then he is dead!—The judgment is at last administered—the righteous judgment which I have been so long anticipating!' She continued in a low plaintive moan, as if communing with her own spirit: 'Oh I have loved him too fondly—better than I have loved my God!—I tried hard not to do it. But, oh! he was so sweet, so engaging, so affectionate! He was my last, too—the last being left on earth that I could call my own!—the last!—do you hear that Agnes!—the last—and that is taken!—Yes! I am left alone—alone, and solitary in all this world—it has nothing now for me to love—and I too may die!"

Exhausted by the strength of her emotions, she sunk into the arms of the sympathising females who had clusterd round her, penetrated to the soul by this, to them novel exhibition of maternal grief. There were no tears, no wringing of the hands, no frantic exclamations, but the low breathings of utter desolation—the solitary joy cut off, in a heart long familiarized to sorrow—the one overflowing drop added to a cup all ready full of bitterness. Every tongue was silent as if spell-bound. Either they dared not awaken the least glimmering of hope, lest it should be again extinguished in deeper darkness: or they were afraid the suspense excited by their intelligence might be worse for her than the most painful certainty. Agnes was conveyed to bed, and the good woman left her to consult together what it was best to do. It was determined that one of them should return to her, and tell the whole truth.

She found her giving vent to her heart in the most pathetic exclamations. "My sweett, sweet Will! I had hoped that we should enter Heaven together! that together we should join the dear ones who had gone before us! But now there is no more hope for me on earth! Oh what do I say? Father! save me from sin! save me from murmuring at thy righteous chastenings! Teach me to trust in thee, although thou slay me!'

'Yes that is right, child! put your trust in Heaven! the Lord is good, and He is kind, and He will comfort you; so don't take on so,' said the warm hearted old lady, addressing Agnes.

The voice of affection brought tears to the dry eyes of Agnes. But they were not the refreshing tears that moisten the heart and cool the withering spirit; they come not gently and sweetly like the dews of heaven. The short, convulsive heavings of an almost bursting heart, were mingled with violent and painful weeping This soon spent itself, and was succeeded by suffocating sobs; like the swelling of the ocean when the storm is gone. The affectionate woman leaned over her persuasively.

'Nay! now dearie, you do wrong to grieve so; you must submit to the will of God!'

'Oh! interrupted Agnes, 'I would that I could resign myself entirely to his justice! but my soul is full of darkness! I can only remember that my child is DEAD.' This one thought had occupied her mind: but now, as if a new light had broken in upon her, she suddenly raised herself from the pillow. 'Dead? who says that he is dead? Where, how, when, did he die?'

'He is not dead! dearie, not dead!'

'Not dead?' cried Agnes, starting up, 'for the love of Heaven, tell me what do you mean? oh, speak where! is he?'

Both hands were upon her bosom, as if to hold in her throbbing heart; and the wildness of her looks made the old woman tremble.

'Be quiet, my child! only be quiet, and I will tell you all about it! The dear little boy was playing at the door, and picking daises to stick in your hair. He was so much diverted by it, that his grandmother let him play on, only telling him not to go away from the door She was busied about the dairy, and when she came to look after him he was gone. She gave the alarm right away, and all the men in the settlement turned out to hunt him up. But you know the woods is a bad place to find a body!

Agnes stopped not to hear the conclusion of the sentence. She was at the door in an instant.

The old woman pulled her forcibly back—'Are you crazy?' said she; 'Do you want to get lost too? If man can find him, he will be brought in before sundown.

While she was yet speaking, several men who had been out in quest of the little wanderer, returned, despairing of success.

"Let none but mothers search!" cried Agnes, and departed from the house.—They called to her in vain. One of the party who had just arrived, followed; hallooing, as he went, to his comrades, to light a fire for a beacon, if they returned not before night.

Agnes fled on with incredible rapidity. Affection lent her wings and strength and courage, or rather, she was supported by Him who with such sweet and powerful emphasis, declares himself the God of widow, and the father of the fatherless' With the lightness and speed of the antelope, she passed over the brush and underwood that sometimes lay scattered in her pathway. Difficulties seemed to vanish as she approached them; and she explored every little hiding place that might conceal her darling, with an ingenuity and industry, resulting from the mighty working of a mother's love, that amounted almost to intuition. Her companion looked on with wonder at her performances; to see a creature so delicate, do that which appeared to require the strength and judgment of a man.—He pretended not to cope with her in the search she was accomplishing. He seemed but the passive instrument of her pleasure; but the humble satellite, attendant upon the evolutions of its mighty planet.

'I must find my boy!' she exclaimed, 'or the forest will receive us both into the same grave! But I shall find him! —He who has ever been my guide in difficulties, my defence in temptation, my strength in weakness, and my consolation in sorrow, will give him back to me. My trust is in the Lord!'

Agnes went on and on. She knew not how far she had traversed the forest, for there are no way-marks to ascertain the distance or direction, and one may wander on for hours and days, and terminate their journey near the very place where they commenced it. She soon came to a spot more open than she had hitherto passed; where the wild flower and the winter-green grew in such abundance as almost to cover the earth with a rich carpet of scarlet, and green, and purple. Agnes' heart beat quicker as she thought—'Ah! this is a place which would attract my darling!' She almost expected to see him sleeping on the bed of flowers before her. She cast a rapid glance around—

"William!'

She paused expecting a reply—

'My darling Will!'

There was a slight rustling in the bushes near her. She flew with outstretched arms to clasp her son but it was only the young fawn who had been startled from his slumbers. Agnes' heart died within her. She felt the sickness of 'hope deferred.' The transition from expectation, from almost certainty to disappointment had been so abrupt and so decisive, that she seated herself on the cold grass, and wept in uncontrolled emotion.

'Cheer up, lady!' said her companion; 'dont be so down hearted! The boy will yet be found, if human nature can accomplish it, for I never saw any body so 'cute in the woods as you be, And besides all that, you trust in the Lord, and the good book says, that 'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' '

'It is true!' replied Agnes, 'and it is thankless ingratitude in me to be so unmindful of His goodness; but my heart hovers over my remaining treasure, as the bird flutters around the only nursling that is left in her rifled nest. Come, let us on! the sun will soon be setting, and alas! for my little one if he should have to spend the night in the lone desert!'

They pursued their search—but Agnes with less buoyant hopes than before. As hers faded, the faint expectations of her companion vanished utterly; and he gently hinted that she had better consult her own safety, and return.

'I will DIE here,' she replied, 'rather than desert my precious boy! Do you go home and leave me! the God of the widow will be my safe-guard!'

No, no, lady! no, no! I did'nt speak on my own account! Laws me! I don't value it all, many's the night, I've lain in the woods, with no cover but the blessed heavens.'

The shadows of evening gathered slowly round them, and the trees of the forest began to assume in the twilight those fearful and unearthly forms which excite startling fancies even in the stout-hearted. Agnes thought of the helplessness and ignorance, of the timidity and cowardice of children, and the situation of her desolate little one came over her, clad in ten-fold horrors. In the anguish of her soul she supplicated.

"Oh God! thou hearer of prayer—thou Father of the fatherless! in mercy lead a mother to her child! For his sake who while on earth never turned a beggar from his feet, oh, listen, listen to my cry!'

'Hark! do you not hear something?' she said quickly, turning to her companion. They stood still.—'There it is again?—oh, harken!'—Every faculty was now strained to its utmost point to ascertain the nature of the sound.

'It is!—it is!—Oh God! thou hast heard my prayer! it is his angel voice!—be still, my soul!—oh, which way does it come? my heart beats so violently I cannot listen?'

'Quiet yourself lady!' said the man, who now distinctly heard the soft, sweet accents of a child.

'Oh, look! look!' said Agnes, whose eyes seemed as if they would penetrate the thickening darkness of the forest in their intensity. 'There he is! kneeling on that rock; that hard bare rock. My child! my precious boy! Oh God, I thank thee!' She sunk upon her knees but a few paces from he prostrate child.

The little William was soon locked fast in the arms of his doting, and now happy mother; and was relating to her the simple story of his wandering: his alarm; his trust in God; his ascent upon the rock, to see if he could discover any signs of habitation; his consequent disappointment; and the feelings with which he was submitting to his lot,—while his sympathising protector shed tears of pleasure and admiration.

The happy party were soon seated, but they were not long obliged to wait. The beacon which they had kindled streamed upward to the heavens; and showed them, to their astonishment, that they were not far from their own dwellings. The light of a brilliant moon shone upon their footsteps; and Agness and the kind-hearted associate of her search, returned laden with the treasure they had so effecually sought; they returned, to awaken happiness in the hearts which they had left sorrowing, and to render devout thanksgivings to the widow's God and orphan's Father.

MR. SAMPSON'S HOUSE.

Once upon a time, a queer old fellow named Smith started from a Southern city on a pedestrian excursion of about one hundred miles. He was not such a very old fellow either. He was about forty years older than he was when born This Smith—he was not connected with the John Smith family in the most remote degree—was a man of many peculiarities. If absolute stupidity did not form a prominent trait in his character, it was a quality which very much resembled stupidity, and might easily be taken for it, by at least one half the world. He had always manifested a singular abstraction, generally described as absence of mind, and would frequently roam about the streets an entire day without recognizing one of his numerous friends, apparently without being aware of the nature of his movements.

This was Mr. Smith. We were saying that Mr Smith started upon a journey on the "tentoed machine" spoken of in John Bull. After travelling a few miles our pedestrian felt somewhat thirsty, and called at a small establishment—which looked as though it was just about half a tavern—for a drink. A good natured young fellow waited upon him, brought his brandy and water, and in addition, furnished him with a bit of bread & cheese. All this was decidedly welcome and refreshing. After Mr. S. had quenched his thirst and satisfied the slight cravings of his appetite he recommenced his travels. As he left the city tolerably early in the morning, he thought he might walk two or three hours longer before he stopped for dinner. His road seemed to be very level, and was skirted on one side with an uncommonly high fence.—On he footed it for about three hours longer, until a glance at the position of the sun satified him, that he had better secure his noon day meal. He called at small dwelling on the road side, and the following dialogue ensued between him and a boy standing in the door way:

'Who lives here, my son?'

'Mr. Sampson, sir.'

'Do you keep tavern?'

'Why sorter, and sorter not, we accommodate people sometimes."

'Can I get dinner here?'

'Yes sir, walk in.'

Our traveller walked in, and in the course of half an hour, a nice comfortable dinner smoking hot, was set before him. He ate, drank; paid his moderate bill put on his hat took his walking stick and proceeded on his journey. Before he renewed his labors, however, he took the precaution to fill his pipe carefully, and to light it. Fresh and vigorous as ever, he then pushed ahead. As the sun crept down towards the horizon, Mr. Smith began to feel some degree of weariness stealing over him, but he nevertheless persevered until it was quite dark. Finding himself opposite a small house by the road side, he inquired of a youth seated upon the threshold:

'Who lives here, my son?'

Mr. Sampson, sir.'

'Can I get supper and lodging here to night, by paying for it?'

'Certainly, sir—walk in.'

Mr. Smith crossed the threshold, laid aside his hat and cane, drank a cup of tea and eat two or three slices of toast—read 4 chapters in Fox's Book of Martyrs, which he found upon the Mantelpiece, and went to bed. When he awoke in the morning, the sun was just showing its broad red disc above the trees, he found the breakfast upon the table waiting for him. He finished the morning meal, settled his account, and commenced his travels the second day. One thing, simply attracted his observation—the road was exceedingly uniform—but the fact excited no surprise. At noon he called at a snug little house, and asked a lad who was gazing out of a window—

'Who lives here, my son?'

'Mr. Sampson, sir.'

Our traveller paused a moment, reflected and seemed to be coning over some name or circumstance in his mind; at last he said:

'Are there many of the name of Sampson on this road my son?'

'Good many, said the boy.

'I thought so. Can you give me dinner here?'

'Certainly sir—walk in.'

Mr. Smith stepped in, swallowed his dinner, and once more took to the road. When night came on, he of course stopped at the first house in his way. A youth sat upon the wheelbarrow at the door whistling.

'Who lives here, my son?'

'Mr. Sampson, sir.'

'Mr. Sampson! I should think they were all Sampsons on this road. I got dinner at one Mr. Sampson's yesterday, slept at another Mr Sampson's last night and here I am at another Mr. Sampson's to-night. Besides, the houses I have seen upon this road all look alike; it is very queer.'

'Can you give me supper and lodging?' said the traveller.

Certainly—walk in.'

'I'm blessed if this isn't a queer country?' said the old man, as he went to bed; "this looks exactly like the room I slept in last night; but I suppose it's all right."

It was full two o'clock the next day when after travelling briskly at least six hours. Mr. Smith stopped at a comfortable small dwelling with the intention of securing his dinner. A boy stood in the door.

'How d'ye do?' said the boy.

'Nicely, my son. Who lives here?'

'Mr. Sampson. I've told you that half a dozen times already'

'I have'nt been here before have I?'

'I reckon you have; but an't you travelling on a bet?'

'Travelling on a bet! no; what put that in your head?'

'Why you've been walking round the race course here for two days and a half, and I did'nt suppose you was doing it for fun.'

For the first time, now, Mr. Smith took a survey of things and to his astonishment discovered that the boy had been telling the truth. He drew his hat over his forehead and started for home determined never to venture upon a pedestrian excursion again.

From Hunt's Merchants Magazine.

SMUGGLED GOODS.

AN ANECDOTE OF THE LAST WAR.

The impression made on our boyhood are the strongest we ever receive, and remain with us even to old age as fresh and vivid as at the first. During our clerkship we form opinions of men and things which no after circumstances can eradicate. A boy when he sees any inconsistency of character in another, makes no allowance for circumstances? he judges only the naked facts and condemns or approves accordingly. I never knew a man who stood well in the community of whom his clerks thought meanly, and hence I would rather have the good opinion of my clerk than a stranger's, for if less critical, it is more honest and true. I recollect being made a confidant in the secrets of two individuals when a boy, which gave me a contempt for their characters that I could never get rid of, & if brought in contact in business with them now I should always suspect their honesty. They were heated politicians, with so hearty a contempt for John Bull, that taking their own word for it, they would not so much as eat with a knife and fork of English manufacture, if they could avoid it. During the war the English had possession of Castine, at the head of Penobscot bay, and smuggling English goods from that place in the country was extensively practised. The temptation was too great for the cupidity of our two republicans, and overcame all their scruples. I livid at that time in an Eastern town, and one bitter cold night in February, I was called from my bed by two men whom I never knew before, at two o'clock, to go and receive several sleigh loads of smuggled goods, which by direction of my employer, I took into the cellar, through a back way, in the store where I was a clerk, and secreted them carefully.

One of the sleighs was loaded with hardware, and in crossing the ferry over the Kennebec, they met a sad accident. The ferry boat was a large flat gondola. When they arrived on the opposite side, intending to stop for some refreshment, they drove the sleighs out of the gondola, except the hindmost one, which being loaded with hardware was very heavy and tipped the boat very much. This was permitted to remain and, while they were regaling themselves, the tide rose, overflowed the sides of the boat and sunk it. The goods were of course wet.—Among them was a package of sewing needles, and being accustomed to handling such goods, the republicans employed me to open dry and repack them in emery which I did very carefully, at the expense of several days labor. Needles were five times as dear then as now, so that the case was valued at some hundreds of dollars, which but for my care and industry would have been spoiled entirely. And one day when a custom house officer came into the store to search for smuggled goods, I showed him every place in the store except where they were. The goods were delivered out again and sent in small parcels to Boston and New York for sale. The part I had taken and the value of my services led me to expect a generous reward and I congratulated myself with the anticipated profits of fidelity to the trust reposed in me. When the last package of goods was removed, one of the smugglars came to me and said; "You are a capital little fellow; if I had you in my store you would be worth your weight in gold.—Always be faithful and you will always be trusted.

Expectation was now on tiptoe; I would not have given a sixpence to insure a twenty dollar bill in my hand the next moment, but like all high wordly hopes mine were doomed to disappointment. The republican smuggler put his hand in his pocket and solemnly drew forth an American half dollar. "That," said he, "is the real coin, the true American eagle keep it, and be sure you always avoid an Englishman as you would poison." He took his valise in his hand and walked towards the stage office—I looked after him till he was out of sight: and his gait, form and figure, to the smallest outline, are as fresh in my memory now as at that moment, and the contempt I then felt for him as never been effaced. I have met him often in the streets of New York, he does not know me, but I never passed him without laughing, though I have kept his secret to this day.

The morals which I would draw from this short story, are, first, always make a bargain for your services beforehand; never expect a sense of justice in a man whom you know to be dishonest in any thing: never trust a man's patriotism who talks loudly in politics.

A HEARD OF BUFFALOES.—It is said that a Yankee's ingenuity is adequate to any emergency, and whether coaxing a consulship out of Congress, or catching coons his brain ever teems with some huge plan, to circumnavigate the globe in a mackerel smack, or convert sawdust into anti-despeptic pills. Some such unique scheme must heve entered into the head of the hunters having possession of the buffalo herd now in this city.—The history of their taking, as gathered from the owner, is substantially as follow.:

In April, 1841, a "native" residing somewhere this side of sun down, in Missouri, gathered together a company of seventeen men, twelve horses, four wagons, and fifty-five cows and calves, with an intent to traverse the immense plain near the base of the Rocky Mountains, in search of young buffaloes.

After reaching the scene of operations, the hunters would select half a dozen of the fleetest horses and dash off, Arab-like to the plain. Espying a herd, they would hold up and cautiously approach the animals, keeping well to the leeward as seamen say, to prevent the animals from taking alarm, which they easily do when the hunter is to windward Once near enough, a rush is made among the herd, and by means of *lassos*, the Mexican mode catching cattle with a rope, several of the creatures would be secured. The hunters aimed at the calves, but if they missed them and happened to catch a tartar that was likely to prove an ugly customer, the rifle was brought into request immediately and the animal despatched.

Such of the young as were secured would be taken back to the encampment and domesticated by killing a calf belonging to one of the cows which they took with them, on their departure from home—the cow and her young offspring, at the same time, having been fastened to a stake to prevent escape. In a week the young buffalo would become so much attached to "muley," that it would be loosened and suffered to run at large with the cow, and from that time the two were inseperable. In this manner, after a period of four months, the whole were taken and domesticated.

When the hunters had secured 37 young buffaloes, an antelope, and an elk, the whole returned again to their homes. The location of their operation was on the Arkansas, some 500 miles W. S. W. from Independence, Mo. far beyond the present bounds of civilization. The animals are now some fifteen months old and are particularly fond of oats or other grain, but eat with avidity well cured hay or grass. One of the cows used in the hunting excursion is still with the herd and acts as a kind of bell-wether, the one to go ahead, and is followed by the buffaloes in a drove from one point to another, where the proprietors deem it best to exhibit. In a few weeks they

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