EASTON GAZETTE.

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From Arthur's Magazine.

LOST AND FOUND.

A TALE OF TRUTH.

BY EMMA C. EMBRUY

From her earliest childhood Lois Layton had been one of the most untameable of merry maiden. Her free, bold, joyous spirit, seemed to mock at all control, and to find a sort of perverse pleasure in venturing to the very verge of error without really going a step beyond. The gleeful music of the summer wind, the unmeasured carol of the forest bird, the glad play of sunny waters, all might have furnished similes to a poet of her wild and lawless joyousness of temper. But, unhappily, while thus assimilated to all lovely things in nature, Lois was most unlike the men and women among whom her lot was cast. Born and bred in one of the most primitive of New England villages, where the usages of puritan ancestors still existed in all their uncompromising rigor, and where all natural impulses and instincts were regarded as necessarily sinful, she was continually offending against the proprieties of time, place, and circumstance, so that at length she came to be regarded as a sort of scapegoat for the whole community,—a creature upon whose head was visited the offences of all the less frank or more orderly damsels in the place. Yet Lois was liked in spite of her waywardness, for her cheerful good humor, her kindness, and readiness to help others, were merits of no trifling value among those who were taught by their own needs to bear each other's burdens. Every body liked her, every body scolded at her, and every body pitied her, for the stepmother who presided over her father's household, had little love for the child that from infancy had revolted against her rigid discipline.

An object of perpetual censure at home and of illnatured gossip abroad, Lois had gradually acquired a sort of outlawed feeling,—a kind of indifference growing out of her despair of ever doing what people would think right. So she did what she pleased, worked when she could not help it, sung, laughed, frolicked and flirted with every luckless wight who approached her in the guise of a country Corydon, until she had passed her twentieth summer. At that period a change came over her spirit. She grew grave and sad, her cheek lost its roundness and its rosiness, and as the spendthrift is apt to become the closest of misers, so the wildest of merry maidens seemed now likely to fall into the extreme of moping dullness. Some illnatured friend ventured to suggest that this unwanted seriousness had fallen upon Lois at the precise moment of Ralph Holford's departure for the far west; but the open scorn with which the girl treated this piece of scandal soon silenced all such rumors, and left her to the full indulgence of what was deemed a new whim in this creature of caprice.

On a certain dark and stormy November evening, a small party was assembled in the best parlor of the Layton farm house to witness the marriage of the wayward and pretty Lois. Strange to say, notwithstanding all the predictions of wisdom and illnature, she was about to become the bride of a grave, middle aged clergyman, and those who knew in what estimation the profession is held among the descendants of the pilgrims, may imagine how envied was the good fortune, and how unaccountable it seemed. Lois had never looked lovelier than when, attired in a simple white muslin dress, with her beautiful hair braided smoothly over her fair forehead she sat in the midst of a circle of friends awaiting the appointed hour. It was not then the custom to allow a bride the privilege of privacy until the moment when she was called to plight her vow. She was expected to be attired early, and seated by her lover's side, to receive the visitors as they assembled, while the curious eyes of all present speculated upon the looks and manners of the conscious pair. On this occasion, however, the bride was alone;—the company had gathered, the officiating clergyman was in attendance, but the bridegroom had not yet come, and as minute after minute passed, whispers were interchanged, and looks of wonder cast from one to another, until even Lois began to feel as if she were about to wed a laggard lover.

At length, about an hour after the time, in the midst' of that weary sort of silence which betokens impatient expectation, the door opened, and the tall form of the bridegroom entered. With a slight salutation to the company, he accounted for his delay by simply stating that he had been called to attend a funeral some miles off, and while more than one of the company were struck by this ominous prelude to a wedding, he approached Lois and asked her to afford him a few minutes' private converse. Unheeding the looks of wonder and reproach cast upon them from all sides for such a glaring breach of decorum, Lois arose and led the way into a small room on the opposite side of the hall. As he closed the door, and found himself alone with the pale and trembling girl, the stern features of the bridegroom lost their settled expression of rigid gravity. "You will think this strange conduct, Lois," said he, "but it is for your happiness I would speak before it is too late. As I stood to-night beside the coffin of one as fair and young as you are, Lois, a strange dark fear came upon me. They told me she died broken hearted, because she loved not him to whom her friends had wedded her, and as I knelt beside her lifeless form I bethought me of you, Lois. For the first time,—God grant it be not too late!—the horrible idea crossed my mind that perhaps I was about to consummate a similar sacrifice. Tell me then,—by all your hopes of time and eternity, I adjure you to tell me whether of *your own free will* you are about to become my wife?"

The girl's cheek became as white as her bridal dress, and she gasped for breath as she faintly replied:

"My own will has ever been too much my guide Herbert; why should you think I have takan other counsel now?"

"Because," and his brow grew sterner as he spoke, "because I have heard but now, as I wended my way from the burial to the bridal, a tale of disappointed love, of fickleness, of desertion. One who was my companion in the road mentioned to me a name you have never uttered. Ralph Holford—"

"And what of him?" interrupted Lois, while her cheek, and brow and bosom were crimson with the sudden flush of indignant excitement.

"Thy tell strange tales of devotion on your part, of falsehood on his, Lois."

"And you listened to the slander—shame on you, Herbert Wilton, that you spurned not the man who dared defame your bride even while she was awaiting you at the altar."

"Forgive me, Lois, if I distrust my own happiness; but it has ever seemed strange to me, that one of such cold and unloveable exterior as mine should have won your glad young heart; & to-night my vague fears were shaped into definite form by the words of another. I came to you determined to learn if the tale of your love for another was one of truth, and to tell you, Lois, that I would rather die this moment than bind the unwilling hand, when the heart forbade the thraldom."

For a moment Lois Layton's face wore an expression of irresolution and doubt, but with a strong effort she recovered her self possession, and drawing herself proudly up, she said, with forced calmness:

"If this strange scene be designed to acquaint me with your own change of feeling and purpose, Herbert, say this in plain language, and I am ready to go forth in the face of the cold sneerers who now wonder at our conduct, and proclaim that I have met the recompense of many a past folly in the open scorn of him whom I would have wedded."

"Nay, Lois you wrong me cruelly; I hold it so wicked to put fetters on the soul that I dared not make you my wife until I was assured no such sin could rest upon my conscience. I doubt not your faith by my own deservings. Had I learned that your affections were otherwise disposed, I would gladly have sacrificed my happiness to secure yours; but now that I know there exists not the shadow of a barrier between us, I am happy even beyond my hopes. May heaven grant that the heart which I have so long kept sealed against earthly affections, may not now, in its later days, be given up to idolatry."

A cold shudder ran through the whole frame of Lois as he spoke, and her cheek and lip grew ashy pale. A world of troubled thought was in her conscious look, as she bent her eyes to the ground to avoid his earnest gaze. At that instant the sharp voice of the step mother rang through the hall, and Lois, putting her hand in that of her strange lover, said:

"I have no friend on earth save you, Herbert,—no hope of comfort save in your affection.

"Enough dear Lois, your truth shall never be deceived," and with these words he drew her arm through his and led her from the room. Ten minutes afterwards the bewildered and agitated girl was receiving the congratulations and kisses of those who secretly envied the "minister's wife."

Herbert Wilton was a man of deep passions, of intense earnestness, and of wonderful power of repression. To outward seeming he was stern, cold and uncompromising, full of religious zeal, and devoid of those gentler moods which make the comforts of domestic life so essential to the usefulness, as well as happiness of most men. But they who judged him from without, knew little of the terrible struggle between a passionate nature & an overrigorous sense of duty, which had been the torture of his early life. He was one to do battle with every earthly passion, and to distrust every natural emotion. He had looked upon the affections of humanity as so many obstacles thrown in the way of spirituality,—forgetting that the God, who implanted those qualities within us, is a God of Love as well as Power, and speaks oftener in the still small voice than in the whirlwind or the fire He had now reached middle life, and the crude fanaticism of a youthful zealot had been shaped and tempered by circumstances. The force of an iron will had enabled him so easily to resist temptation, that he could feel no tolerance for those who were overcome of evil. He had not the skill to garb religion in that "beauty of holiness" which is her true adornment. Pictured by him, she wore the stern and forbidding features of despot, whose claims, even when most just were put forth like exactions.

Some fifteen years before during a temporary suspension of his clerical duties, in consequence of ill health, he had taught school in the village where Lois dwelt.—There was something in the wayward, but winning child, that touched the heart of the stern and repellent minister. The stirrings of that mysterious impulse which makes the firmest nature yield to instinctive tenderness in the presence of childhood, taught him to love the merry creature who nestled in his bosom unconscious of awe or fear, and who could only be governed through the awakenings of her affections. The feeling was to innocent to alarm his rigid self-denial, and therefore this one touch of softness, in a usually stern nature, had time to leave its lasting impress. The vicissitudes of a somewhat troubled life had not effaced the recollection of the pretty and joyous child, when after years of absence, he returned to find her in all the bloom of unfolding womanhood. He saw her, too, evidently misplaced in life, unhappy in her associations, and destitute of proper guidance. Lois had welcomed him as an early friend, and had found in his society a relief from the many incongruities of her condition. The result has been already seen. The giddy, passionate unstable girl, to whose limited, or rather ill-trained perceptions, moral responsibility was an incomprehensible idea, became the wife of the stern, cold-mannered, but high principled minister, in whose eyes every weakness incident to humanity was but another form of sin.

Immediately after his marriage, Herbert with his young wife, departed, for Alabama where was to be the future scene of his spiritual labors. They found a home on the borders of a new settlement, which, though rapidly filling up, afforded little community of social interest. A comfortable log cabin surroundered by some acres of cleared land, had already been provided for the expected preacher, and here they took up their abode. In a scantily peopled country, were miles often lay between the nearest neighbors, there was little temptation or opportunity for levity of conduct even had Lois seemed disposed to exhibit her former freakishness. People rarely met together, except on Sunday, when all within twenty miles were accustomed to assemble in the school house for religious worship; and on such occasion the minister's wife was in too much awe of her stern husband to venture any display of her frolic spirit In leed, Herb r's deep affect in had fled from his eyes and lips to hide itself in his heart. He loved her with a degree of intensity which rendered him doubly sensitive to her every fault, and while his stern self denial repressed every outward demonstration of tenderness, his love no less than his sense of responsibility, made him rigidly exacting towards her on every point of duty.

But Herbert Wilton was little skilled in woman's nature. He knew not that in crushing instead of guiding the wrong volition which had made Lois the wayward creature that she seemed, he was, in reality putting out the pure light of her soul, and leaving her in the darkness of ignorance. To influence her will while awakening the perceptions of moral truth would have been right, but to bend and break it beneath the iron rule of power, was to leave her without the only sure defence which her naturally pure instincts could claim. Poor, poor Lois! She was a creature to be petted, carressed, humored, and watched over like a heedless child. The consciousness of dimly understood duties, the weight of household cares, the necessity of continual self examination, was too oppressive to her feeble but loving nature. There was a wild, vain yearning ever within her heart —an unrecognized need of that sympathy which is the atmosphere of life to woman's heart.

Two years passed away, and Lois was now a mother, but even this new affection failed to occupy her restless nature. She loved her child with a sort of girlish fondness, but she had none of that deep sense of maternal responsibility which her husband so earnestly endeavored to teach. If left to herself the natural instincts of womanly tenderness would have given her an insight into many of her new duties, but now when she found her babe was made the theme of new lessons in morals, new lectures on the sinfulness of human nature, and new restrictions and exactions of all kinds, there were times when her increased cares seemed to her far exceeding her new pleasures. She grew sad and silent; her spirits were unequal and capricious, and her voice became tremulous, as if her words were uttered through the weight of some abiding grief.

One evening she had seemed unusually wayward and disturbed in spirit. A deep flush burned on her cheek, a wild light gleamed in her eyes, and her whole appearance denoted a degree of feverishness in mind or body, to which even the absorbed husband could not be blind. With his usual stern contempt for weakness he could not share, he reproved Lois in no measured terms for what he considered her waywardness and nervous folly. Tears were her only reply, and annoyed by her perversity, Herbert at length gave over his admonitions, and after the usual evening devotion in which he took occasion to pray fervently for a better spirit to descend upon his wife, he retired to bed, leaving Lois at the fire beside the cradle of her sleeping child. He had fallen into a light slumber when he was awakened by the opening of the door. He started up and saw Lois in the act of leaving the cabin. As she turned and met his eye, she shut the half open door, and approaching the cradle took up the still sleeping babe. Pressing it fondly to her bosom, she kissed its round cheek again and again, then placed it in her husband's arms, and telling him she was only going to the wood pile, she bade him keep it until her return. Overcome with drowsiness, Herbert remembered nothing more until the gray light of morning broke through the narrow casement, and discovered to him that he was alone. He sprang from his bed and looked eagerly around. The ashes lay dead and cold upon the hearth but the chair where Lois had last sat, the table on which lay her work, the lamp she had lighted still burning dimly in the daylight—all seemed as if she had just risen to prepare for her nightly slumbers. Yet no trace of her could be found either in the dwelling or around the neighborhood. Of course, the whole country was aroused, & parties of men went off in all directions to seek her. At first the belief was that some untoward accident had befallen her, but Herbert's agonized remembrance of her disquietude for some days, led to the surmise, that in a fit of temporary insanity, she had wandered off into the woods. For days and weeks was the search continued and not until every nook of the wide forest had been explored, did they give up all hope of finding at least the lifeless body of the unfortunate Lois.

To a mind accustomed to grasp the realities of things, and to reject every thing which is indefinite, the vague, when forced upon its contemplation, is always the terrible. Herbert's imagination busied itself in all kinds of frightful conjectures respecting the mysterious disappearance of Lois. As trifling circumstances, hitherto unregarded now came back upon his recollection, he uttered a thousand incongruities and inconsistencies, blaming himself at one moment for undue severity, and at another reproaching her for having had so little confidence in him. His prevailing idea evidently was that she had been led by her despondency to the commission of the fearful crime of self murder. There were some however, who gave a different interpretation to the incoherencies of passionate grief,—some, who, from that time, refused to sit under the preaching of the bereaved and sorrowing man, though they ventured not to utter the dark thoughts that lurked within their minds.

Weeks, & months, & years, had fleeted by without revealing any tidings of the fate of Lois. People had half forgotten the circumstances of her sudden disappearance, when they were recalled to their recollection by a frightful revelation of some long hidden crime. A few rods from the cabin where Herbert Wilton dwelt, stood an oak tree of great size, but so aged that its whole trunk was cavernous. During a severe storm, this tree was prostrated by the wind, and, to the horror of the whole neighborhood, its cavity was found to contain human bones. Further investigation proved that it was the skeleton of a female, while the regular and perfect teeth, and the long entangled locks of soft brown hair, showed that death had come to her in the very bloom of youth. A frightful surmise, as sudden and as pervading as the lightning flash, made each man look strangely in his neighbor's face, as they stood beside these frail remains of mortality. It needed but a breath to give definiteness to this vague suspicion, and a sword, uttered by one of Herbert Wilton's enemies, was sufficient. With the fierceness of blood hounds they rushed towards the cabin, and found the unconscious minister watching beside the death bed of his child. Awed by the scene they hastily retreated, but it was only to return armed with legal power, and the next day's sun shown upon the childless father through the bars of a prison.

The cup of Herbert's misfortune was now full. Circumstantial evidence was so strong against him that few were found to doubt his guilt, and the public indignation was deepened into something like vindictiveness, when it was remembered that this man had been for years ministering to them in holy things, desecrating the very altar of God, while the stain of murder was upon his soul. But the secret which death had so long kept was not yet to be revealed. Herbert was tried for the murder of his wife, but links were wanting in the chain of evidence; and, almost in spite of their own convictions the jury were compelled to acquit him. He came out of prison broken in character, crushed in spirit, and perfectly desolate in heart, a branded and ruined man. The law had exonerated him from the horrid charge of murder, but before the tribunal of public opinion he still stood arraigned as a criminal, and from this there was no appeal.

"I will not insult you," thus he wrote to an old friend, "I will not insult you by declaring my innocence. You know that such a crime could not have been committed by me. But what avails a conciousness like this, when the whole of that little world in which I live is convinced of my guilt. I believe, for the conviction has been forced upon me during the progress of the trial, that the bones were indeed those of my lost Lois. I believe that she died beneath the knife of a murderer, but by whom the crime was committed, and for what motive, I am utterly ignorant. To most men this calamity would have been sufficiently overwhelming; but I am destined to severer trial. Blighted in character, forbidden to fulfil my sacred duties, degraded from my profession, I am driven out from society like a hunted wolf. I am old,—older in sorrow than in years, broken in health and hopeless in spirit. Whither I shall go I know not—the brand of Cain is on my brow, and I must now be a lonely wanderer on the face of the earth, hiding myself in the wilderness from the scorn and execration of my fellows."

* * * * * * *

So ne ten years after these events, (which are still well remembered in ———,) an aged man was seen slowly wending his way on foot towards a cluster of rude dwellings which marked the site of a town, destined to become somewhat famous, since in the annals of Texas. The traveller was bent beneath the weight of years, his hair was white as the snow-drift, and his face was marked with deeper lines than times hand could ever trace. He was faint and weary, and, with a stranger's privilege, he paused at the first of these cabins, which stood a little in advance of the village. It was near nightfall, and the fire on the hearth alone gave light to the dwelling in which he now entered. A man of athletic form was crouched beside the embers, with his elbows leaning on his knees, and his head bowed down between his hands. He looked moodily up as the stranger lifted the latch, and to his meek claim upon that hospitality which is usually so readily answered in a new country, he coldly replied:

"If you are weary you can rest beside my fire;—if you want food you must seek it in yonder town. It is three days since I have tasted bread. Hark!" he added, as a faint moan came from an inner room "death is busy there,—my wife,—"

He stopped, his voice failed him, and bending himself down as if some sudden pang had contracted the iron sinews of his strong frame, he wept like a very child.—The stranger was one of those pilgrims of modern days, who go abroad into all lands, teaching the gospel, even as did the apostles of old, seeking neither fee nor reward save in the hope of doing good. His soul yearned with sympathy towards mourner, and words of spiritual consolation were upon his lips, when he was harshly silenced by his ungracious host.

"These are but idle words," he exclaimed, "the cant of wheedling priests, who dream of another world, while they revel in the enjoyments of this. I care not for your visionary future; give me back the light of this world,—the hope and joy of my present life,—give *her* back to me, and I ask nothing beyond. If you cannot stave off death, you can do nothing for me."

A feeble voice was again heard faintly calling, and the man hastily rose. As he bent his stalwart figure beneath the low doorway which led into the sick-chamber, the aged missionary looked almost with terror upon the man, who, strong in physical life, and daring in spirit, could presume thus to brave the dangers of unbelief, and scoff at the thought of an eternity. After some minutes of apparently earnest conversation with some person within, the man returned.

"You are a clergyman, are you not?" said he, abruptly.

"I am."

"And you are sworn to keep the counsel of the dying?"

"I am not of that faith which holds to the efficacy of confession."

"Pshaw,—I care nothing about creeds; my wife is dying,—she has something upon her conscience which she would fain divulge. Will you swear to keep her secret?"

"Her sin lies between herself and her Maker; its confession to mortal ear can avail her little."

"But if it can repair the wrong done to the living?"

"Then will I receive it most willingly, and travel to the ends of the earth to fulfil her wishes."

"You speak earnestly?"

"I speak like one who has suffered wrong, and who would spare others from the griefs which have consumed me."

"There is one," said the man, "who has been deeply wronged; I have never repented the deed, but I have often wished that it had been done more openly. *She* has made me promise that I would reveal the tale, when she shall be no longer here to be shamed by the disclosure,—yet she doubts my word, or perhaps my power to fulfil her last wishes. She would fain talk with you, and perhaps she needs such consolation in her dying hour, as only a priest can give. To me such things are weaknesses; what I dare do I dare abide by;—if I offend the laws of the land I am ready to brave the danger, and I fear nothing from the beings of an unsubstantial world. But women are different, they may be tempted to sin, but they cannot be hardened against remorse. Swear to me that you will never reveal the secret save to the person whom she shall name."

"You shall have the solemn promise of a man who dares not lie before his Maker, and if I keep not such a pledge, neither would I respect an oath.

"Enough,—you will find her in yonder chamber; I have no fancy to hear the tale,—it seems blacker in the telling than in the acting;—I am going for a neighbor, who will be needed here ere the morning dawns."

With these words the stranger flung a pile of faggots upon the hearth, & strode hastily from the room. By the dim light of the smothered fire, the missionary saw, as he approached the bed, the outline of an extended form, but the face, was hidden in the shadow of the pillow. He sat down beside the dying woman and listened to her tale of secret sin and late remorse. At first he listened calmly, as if little interested in the history of early trials and domestic discomforts, but suddenly he started as if an adder had stung him. With a strong effort he restrained himself, and again bent eagerly towards the feeble voice, which now rapidly poured into his ear the guilty story. He heard of a marriage entered into from pride and pique,—of wrong afterwards done to a trusting husband,—of a mother leaving her helpless babe, and going forth in midnight flight with the lover of her youth. Stirless as if turned to stone, the missionary listened to the tale of his own withering wrongs.

"Promise me," said the dying woman, "that you will carry these tidings to the husband whom I have betrayed. I have been happy, oh! too happy, in my sinful life, but now, when death stands beside me, I feel that I must seek to win his forgiveness."

The old man rose to his feet. "Lois Layton, may God forgive you this cruel wrong, but I never can!" he exclaimed.—At that instant, a sudden burst of flame upon the hearth, revealed to each the changed and faded, yet unforgotten face of the other. It was a fearful revelation of a long hidden mystery, for Herbert Wilton had now listened to the death-bed confession of her for whose sake he was a branded and a desolate man.

When Ralph Holford returned, he found her whom he called his wife lying cold and dead upon her pillow, while the missionary had disappeared. A night of frightful storm came on, and on the morrow the body of the stranger was found on the banks of a swollen and turbid stream, some miles distant from the settlement.—The wronger and wronged had met only in life's last moment.

From the Nashville Orthopolitan.

GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR.

The Commander of the American Army of Occupation.

Recent events have thrown this gentleman so prominently before the public, that we feel disposed to gratify the strong desire, expressed by many, by giving some of the incidents of his life.

Gen. Taylor entered the army in 1808, immediately after the attack on the Chesapeake, and has been in the service of his country from that time to the present. Having entered the army a lieutenant of infantry, he had risen to the command of a company at the beginning of the *last war*

For his gallant defence of *Fort Harrison*, on the 5th September, 1812, President Madison conferred upon him the brevet rank of Major, and he is is now the *oldest brevet* in the army.

In 1832, he became the Colonel of the 5th Infantry; with this regiment he went to Florida in 1936, where he was always foremost in danger.

On the 25th of December, 1836, Col. Taylor, at the head of a detachment of about 500 men, composed of the 1st, 4th and 6th regiments of U. S. Infantry and some Missouri volunteers, met about 700 Indians, under Aligator, Sam Jones, and Coa-coo-che, on the banks of the O-ke-cho-bee. This battle was sought by the Indians, for the day before the engagement Col. Taylor received a challenge from Alligator, telling, him where to find him, and bantering him to *come on*. Col. Taylor desired nothing better & immediately pushed on at a rapid march, to the expected battle ground, fearful that the wily Indian might change his purpose. The Indians had a strong position in a thick swamp, covered in front by a small stream, whose quick sands rendered it almost impassible but Col. T. pushed through the quicksands and swamps, in the face of a deadly fire from a concealed foe, driving the Indians before him. The action was long and severe. The Indians yielding the ground inch by inch, and then only at the point of the bayonet. After three hours of bloody contest, the Indians were routed, and pursued with great slaughter until night. This was the last stand the Indians ever made, in a large body, and the only instance in which they voluntarily gave battle.—Though Col. Taylor won the day, it was at an expense of 149 killed and wounded —more than one fourth of his whole force. Two colonels (Col. Thompson, of the 5th Infantry, and Col. Gentry, of the Missouri Volunteers,) fell at the head of the troops. Capt. Van Swearingen, and Lieuts Brooke and Carter, also fell in the engagement.

During the whole engagement, Colonel Taylor remained on horseback, passing from point to point, cheering his men to the conflict, and exposed to the Indian rifle every moment. The spirit with which the commander and all his forces entered into the conflict, was exhibited in some verses written on the occasion, by a soldier.

"There's battle in yon hammock black,
There's lightning in yon cloud,
Hark! hark! to the music, comrades dear,
For the Indian yell is loud;
For the Indian yell is loud, my boys,
And the rifle's flash is free;
But the field of battle is our home,
And happy men are we;
And happy men are we; &c.

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