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SELECTED TALES.

Precaution not Prevention.

BY MRS. CAROLINE H. BUTLER.

It was a large room opening into a delightful shrubbery redolent with all the sweet briar and clematis united their graceful tendrils, were curtained with rose colored damask—the walls displayed the finest paintings from eminent masters—book cases of carved oak, highly polished, were filled with volumes in the most costly bindings, and tables covered with portfolios, etchings, drawings half finished, manuscripts, &c. The only occupant of this room was a gentleman apparently about fifty years of age—to pronounce him a minute older would only be to impugn the skill of his tailor, his hair-dresser, his dentist, and of the faithful John, who daily presides over the mysteries of his toilet—*fifty* then be it. His dress was scrupulously neat; a coat of dark navy blue contrasts well with the pantaloons of light kerseymere—a vest of exquisite pattern—linen white as snow, and elaborately plaited, and a neck tie of faultless elegance, completed the dress of this gentleman. But for the ceaseless smile of self complacency the countenance of Mr. Rivers would have been highly pleasing, while the suavity of his manners was almost unparelleled. A widower, free from all parental obligation, save whatever of that quality he might deem sufficient for the wants of an orphan ward, and the son of a deceased brother. Such was Mr. Rivers.

He was seated at one of the windows, apparently sketching the beautiful scenery it commanded, (an elegant employment, bye the bye, in which he delighted to be often surprised.) The hue of the rose flitted from the curtains to his cheek—the soft morning wind just kissed his temples—his white hand wielded the pencil most gracefully, and—in short, he formed quite a picture himself. For some time he remained with pencil in hand, yet, as it unfortunately happened, no one entered the room to observe him but the old housekeeper and the coachman; he at length, tired of attitudinizing, rang the bell.

"John, tell your young mistress I request her company in the library."

"Yes, sir."

In a few moments a sweet voice was heard singing a lively little air—there was a light tap at the door—then first a roguish pair of eyes peepd in—next a little head with a redundance of dark brown tresses—a dainty foot next rested its tiny proportions on the rich carpet, and finally the whole person of a laughing Hebe bounded like a fawn into the room, and running to Mr. Rivers—her two little hands were placed on each cheek, and a sweet kiss rested on his forehead.

"Sit down, my love," said Mr. Rivers, with the sweetest smile, "I have something to say to you of the greatest importance."

And snatching up a little tabouret, Jessie complied, her eyes fixed demurely upon the countenance of her guardian.

"Jessie—hem—Jessie, how old are you, Jessie?" premised Mr. Rivers.

"O, I am *so* old," replied Jessie, pretending to look very grave, "why only think, dear guardy, to-morrow I shall be seventeen!"

"Seventeen—hem—very well. Jessie, my love, how should you like to be married?"

"Married? why, guardy—*me* married!"

"Yes, my love," with another sweet smile; "how would you like to have an establishment of your own—to be your own mistress—do as you pleased, and—"

"O, delightful!" interrupted Jessie, "to be my own mistress! do what I pleased! delightful! let me see what I *would* do—first, I would get Claude—"

"Never mind Claude, my dear," said Mr. Rivers, with the slightest possible tone of impatience; "I have sent for you on a more important topic. Marriage, Jessie, was ordained for the good of man—for the bliss of man—for the happiness of man—"

"And not for woman?" provokingly aked Jessie.

"Yes, for woman—I should have said *mutual* happiness," continued Mr. Rivers, still more sweetly. "One of the greatest English poets, Jessie, thus eulogizes this blissful state:

'Till Hymen brought his love delighted hour.
There dwelt no joy in Eden's rosy bower.'

Thus, you see, my dear, even Paradise was not Paradise 'till woman smiled'——answer me, Jessie—should you like to be married?"

The affair grew serious, and so Jessie grew serious too. At length she said:

"And suppose I should say 'yes,' where am I to find a husband?"

"This is a question I am happily prepared to answer," replied Mr. Rivers, with honeyed voice and smile to match—"but cannot you guess, my dear?"

But Jessie could not—and so Mr. Rivers proceeded to the enlightenment of her dull comprehension by premising:

"My love you already know, and knowing, I trust, already love him—for he has ever been near you—he is one who—"

"O, it is Claude!" cried Jessie, clapping her little hands and blushing like a rose.

"No, it is not Claude, (and this time there was no smile,) "and sorry should I be to see you wedded to that hair-brained, wild nephew of mine."

"But who is it then, dear guardy? (although I know I shall not like him!") she added, in a low voice.

Mr. Rivers took her hand, pressed it very gently, and said:

"In me, dear Jessie, behold him!—Yes, I, I will be that happy man—your husband."

"*You!* guardy *you!*" and then such a laugh! clear, and musical as the notes of the sky-lark it burst from her merry heart.

Why she should laugh Mr. Rivers could not imagine, so he patted her little head and said:

"Be quiet, my dear, do, and hear what I have to say. In marrying me you at once become your own mistress—my fortune shall be at your disposal—house—servants—equipage, all are yours—and in me you will possess a husband ever but too happy to anticipate your slightest wishes. Speak, then, my dearest girl, and tell me you will be mine."

But when Jessie looked up and met the countenance of her guardian so *done* to represent a sentimental lover, her mirth again burst forth, until the patience of even the imperturable Mr. Rivers was moved. The result was, smiles were exchanged for tears, and flying to her chamber poor Jessie wept as if her little heart would break. The native buoyancy of her disposition, however, soon chased away the tears, as flit the clouds of an April day before the cheerful sun—so, springing from her seat, she bathed her tell-tale eyes, arranged her disordered toilet, and then began to contemplate seriously the prospect before her. She had been accustomed to consider the words of her guardian as laws she must obey—his wishes ever to be regarded in preference to her own. But now, alas! it is no longer the guardian, the father, who speaks—no, these wishes are now revealed to her in the guise of a lover! The tie which has so long bound him to her filial affections he himself now rends, that she may be his by a nearer, dearer bond!

"What am I to do!" thought Jessie, "and what will Claude say! Ah, right, I will run and ask dear Claude all about it." And the next moment she was tripping through the shrubbery, and the next, arm in arm with a handsome young man in a green hunting jacket. Do you see now how Claude stamps his foot—now hear her merry laugh—he raves—she entreats.

"But what could I do, Claude? I could not tell dear guardy he was too old, and too foolish—no, nor I could not tell him I did not love him, for I do love him dearly."

"Indeed! Miss Jessie," pettishly replies Claude.

"Yes, *indeed!* Mr. Claude—and so do you too—but then I do not want to marry him, do I?"

"*No!* nor you shall not! O, the old fox—marry my little Jessie—not he indeed! no, not if I have to marry you myself. I say, Jessie," cried Claude, turning his laughing face toward her, "suppose we run away and get married just out of spite."

But Jessie places her little hand over his mouth, which it seems as if he would devour with kisses, and now they are sauntering toward the shore of yonder little lake, which lies like a mirror carelessly thrown amid fruits and flowers.

The rays of the declining sun stole through the fragrant honeysuckles at the window, and blending with the rosy hue of the silken hangings, diffused a soft, mellow light around the pleasant apartment wherein Mr. Rivers was first discovered by the reader. He is sitting there still. The close fitting coat, however, of the morning is exchanged for an elegant flowered dressing-gown, and reclining within the yielding cushions of a luxurious chair—a table before him on which books and papers are confusedly mingled, as if by press of business, with an open letter in his hand, Mr. Rivers is again before us. Our young friend of the green hunting-jacket is also there—he stands near one of the windows, with an arch and mirthful expression of countenance, carelessly leaning upon his gun, while Turk, his favorite pointer, has made himself comfortable by appropriating a sofa exclusive to his own use.—Mr. Rivers still smiles—but with the smile there may also be detected a look of perplexity and vexation—the business before him is evidently embarrassing.

In fact, Mr. Rivers had found out that the presence of such a handsome, sprightly lad as his nephew would prove no auxiliary to his designs upon the heart and hand of Jessie. Not that he by any means doubted the fascination of his own person, or that Jessie would be so unwise as to resist all the tempting *et ceteras* of wealth which he had thrown into the scale—neither would she now, for the first time in her life, exert a will of her own in opposition to his wishes—all these things were as utter impossibilities to the vanity-pampered mind of Mr. Rivers. But there was no necessity that Claude should always be reading with Jessie—or that Jessie should always accompany Claude in his rambles—none at all—and so, to put a quietus at once upon such folly Mr. Rivers determined as soon as arrangements could be effected to send his nephew to Europe, and in the meanwhile to despatch Jessie to visit an old lady residing some ten miles from the Grove. These discreet resolves all proved that Mr. Rivers had cut his wisdom teeth.

But how to announce this project to his nephew occasioned his present perplexity. Turning at lengthh toward Claude with an air which seemed to say, "you see how much I am ever exerting myself for you," he began—

"My dear nephew, it is a source of great happiness to *me* to be the instrument of happiness to *you*, (I wish bye the bye, Claude, you would remove the dirt of the fields from your boots, and not suffer Turk to follow you into this room!) To the eyes of youth, Claude, the vista of life is ever adorned with flowers of the most brilliant dyes, and to inhale, (look, Claude, that beast of yours is absolutely *noseing* my drawings!) to pluck the delights of this beautiful perspective is naturally the wish of every youthful mind—therefore it is I am so much delighted at having it in my power to remove you from this dull sphere. (You will injure the carpet by twirling your gun in that manner!) I have this day received a letter from one of my many Parisian correspondents upon matters which require immediate and personal attention. There are reasons why I cannot leave at present, (here Turk received a kick from Claude,) and, therefore, to you I shall entrust the affair, and it is one of such importance as must make you feel honored by the charge. You can make your arrangements, nephew, to sail for Liverpool in the next steamer."

"May I be hanged if I do!" thought Claude, but he only said with much coolness:

"I thank you for your kindness, uncle, but really I do not feel disposed to accept your offer, advantageous as you may consider it."

"Not accept my offer! You astonish me." And Mr. Rivers rubbed his forehead, as if he doubted his own sanity.

"And besides, uncle, I have promised Jessie to take her to Boston next week."

"No matter about Jessie," answered Mr. Rivers, rather hastily; "she will not go—and neither has she any inclination to visit Boston at present."

"That is very strange, sir," said Claude, "it was only last night we were speaking of it."

"Hem!—Claude—there is an event—ahem!—in short, something has this day occured which—which will probably influence all Jessie's future movements."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Claude, looking profoundly innocent.

"Yes, nephew—in fact, Claude, I expect to marry Jessie in a few weeks."

"Marry Jessie!—you astonish me—*to whom?*" said Claude.

"Myself."

"You! impossible! you!" And if Jessie had laughed in the morning, more merrily laughed Claude now—it might have been the wind, but it seemed as if a sweet voice under the window caught up the notes and sent them thrilling through the shrubbery like the low warbling of a bird.

"Excuse me, uncle, but really the idea struck me at first as being very laughable."

"And why so, sir?" and if ever Mr. Rivers looked black this was the time.

"Why, Jessie is but a child as it were"—answered Claude naively—"and you are not so very, very young, uncle."

"That, sir, permit me to say, is no affair of yours."

"O, no, but Jessie is only seventeen!"

"Well, you need not trouble yourself about her age, it is not you who are to marry her."

"Ahem!"

"When you have reflected a little more upon the peculiar eligibility of the plan I propose for you, you will thank me that I now *insist upon your compliance*—therefore make your arrangements at once."

Claude made no answer, but carelessly whistling to his dog, bowed to Mr. Rivers, and with 'a lurking devil in his eye,' left the apartment.

The morning dawned bright and beautiful; and long before Mr. Rivers had deemed it necessary to summon to his toilet the trusty John, Claude and Jessie held a long, and we may presume interesting conversation in the summer-house, and the result was that Claude seemed suddenly to be aware of the immense advantages which would accrue to him by accepting the proposal of his uncle; at least we may infer this from his making known to Mr. Rivers immediately after breakfast his readiness to comply with his wishes. Delighted at the prospect of being speedily removed from the presence of one whose influence over the mind of Jessie he so much dreaded, Mr. Rivers with great alacrity commenced making all the necessary preparations for his nephew's departure, in which Claude himself, with unwonted zeal, assisted. Jessie was already a welcome visitor with the old lady whose roof was considered an asylum so much safer than his own by the prudent Mr. Rivers—her presence being removed, the work went rapidly on. It was the evening before Claude's intended departure that he stood before his uncle, (and this time, from policy, Turk was excluded the conference) evidently in some embarrassment, as if he wished, yet feared, to speak the subject on his mind. To the inquiries of Mr. Rivers, however, he at length made answer.

"Why, the fact is, my dear uncle, I have got myself into a foolish predicament, and all for helping a young friend of mine in a silly love scrape. Will you be so kind as to assist me with your advice, or at least assure me that you do not condemn my rashness."

"O certainly, certainly, what is it, my dear Claude?" blandly answered Mr. Rivers, laying down his book.

"A very particular friend of mine, whose name from motives of delicacy I must for the present conceal, has been foolish enough to fall deeply in love with a young and charming girl—perhaps, however, you, uncle, will not deem him so foolish as would those whose hearts have never been touched by Cupid's arrows."

"Go on Claude," said Mr. Rivers, gently smiling at the 'soft impeachment.'

"This love she sincerely and ardently returns," continued Claude, "but as another proof that the course of true love never did run smooth, they are now forbidden—aye forbidden—by the arbitrary decision of relatives, to indulge longer their bright dream of happiness! Is it not an outrage, sir? for they have long known and loved each other.—Think, sir, if it were your *own case* what your feelings would be!" And Claude strode angrily across the room, as if he were in reality the aggrieved party.

"It is indeed, a painful business," answered Mr. Rivers, "but is there no reason assigned for this cruel severing of hearts!"

"O yes, uncle, a capital reason—they wish to marry her to some other person whom their wisdom has discovered—a capital reason, is it not?"

"Great injustice, Claude!"

"Yes sir, so I say, great injustice—I am glad to hear you speak thus. Ah, I feel for my friend as if it were myself, and for the poor young lady too. Now, uncle, to let you into a secret—they have determined upon an elopement—there is no other way; they are to be torn asunder to gratify the whims of a third party; and to avoid this they are resolved to flee and be happy."

"Spirited, at any rate—but yet, nephew, I cannot say that I exactly approve of their course—it does not look right thus to—"

"No, it does not look, as you say, but what can they do? *You*, uncle, surely, with your present prospects of domestic happiness, can pardon them, and not judge with too much severity!" and here Claude assumed such a rueful face, that a tear *almost* trickled down the classical nose of Mr. Rivers.

"True, Claude, they are to be pitied, and under such circumstances I should feel unwilling to condemn the propriety of their intentions. But as yet I do not see wherein you are a party concerned."

"I was just going to tell you, sir, that, carried away by my feelings upon the subject, I have promised to aid them all in my power. Now, my dear uncle, as I am going to town in the morning, and as there is plenty of room in the carriage, why—why—in short unless you forbid me I have promised to take charge myself of these unfortunate lovers."

"No, Claude, I do not forbid you, yet I am sorry to find you implicated in an affair of so delicate a nature."

"But do you not think they will be forgiven? for it appears to me that it would be egregious folly to nourish resentment against them after the affair is finished."

"Yes, Claude, I agree with you—it would be absurd—still there are many who, to their dying day, would never forgive a thing of this kind—never."

"But were the case your own uncle?"

"Why, I should forgive them, certainly, and however much I may disapprove of elopements in general, there are many allowances to be made for your friend—the parties are young—have long loved each other—ahem!—the heart, Claude, cannot be controlled."

"No, sir."

"And now, at this unfortunate crisis, their only resource seems to be in flight."

"Precisely so, sir."

"But do you think your friend is worthy the affections of the young lady?"

"I think so, sir—I have an excellent opinion of him! Have I, then, your consent to make use of your carriage to aid the lovers in their flight?"

Mr. Rivers having signified his assent, in a few moments the subject was dismissed in order that all business arrangements pertaining to Claude's Parisian trip might be closed. At an early hour next morning Claude bade his uncle farewell.

"You will stop and say 'good bye' to Jessie?" cried Mr. Rivers, putting his head into the carriage window, feeling unusually complaisant to his nephew, now that he was about to depart for so long a time.

"Well—yes—perhaps I will, it will not detain me long," answered Claude, rather indifferently—and then reclining back in the carriage, as it rolled away from the door, he indulged in a long and hearty laugh.

It was very considerate in Mr. Rivers to allow two whole days to intervene between his nephew's departure and that whereon he destined to bring Jessie home He always paid great deference to the '*eyes of the world*,' and there were some who possibly might have looked upon an *instant* return of his ward as indicating that jealousy alone had tempted him to remove her from under his own roof until Claude had departed also. Be that as it may, on the third morning Mr. Rivers seated himself in a pretty gig, and taking the reins in his own white-gloved hands, rolled gently along toward the residence of his old friend. The thistle down floating lightly over the dewy fields—now poised for a moment on some silvered blade—now resting in the bosom of some wild flower—was not more buoyant than the heart of Mr. Rivers. Never before had the face of nature appeared so beautiful. The birds warbled in the thickets—the grasshoppers chiped by the road side, and myriads of butterflies sported on rainbow wing before him. Mr. Rivers was a happy man—his smile was more sweet than usual!

At length the little white cottage of the widow appeared in sight, and in a few moments the horse was fastened to a thrifty maple, and Mr. Rivers walked up the shady path leading to the door. The good lady received him very cordially, although evidently with some surprise—the usual compliments passed, and then the inquiries were made for Jessie.

"Jessie! she is not here—bless me, is she not at home?"

"Not *here!* Jessie not here!"

"Why no—bless you—she left two days ago in your own carriage with Master Claude!"

The truth flashed at once upon the mind of Mr. Rivers. Yes, it was too true—they had eloped—the fable of Claude's sentimental lovers illustrated! Rage, mortification and disappointment beat about the heart of the poor man by turns, until he was almost stifled—no one that had seen the courteous Mr. Rivers one hour before would have recognized the suddenly grown old gentleman who now stormed and raved about the narrow confines of Mrs. Knight's parlor. Could he have annihilated time and space to reach the truant lovers he would have done so—but all he *could* do was to rush out of the house, mount his gig, and drive like one demented to the first inn, where engaging a carriage, he bade the driver haste with all speed to Boston.

The first question Mr. Rivers asked on alighting at the Tremont was if the steamer had sailed—she had not. Somewhat relieved by this assurance, he next cast his eyes over the late arrivals at the hotel, and there, sure enough, in his nephew's own hand writing, he read,—'Claude Rivers and Lady.' *Claude Rivers and Lady!*—O! what a whirlpool raged in his brain for some moments! entering his own name, he requested a private room, that he might collect his disordered senses ere he appeared before the fugitives. He had not been there long when a note was put into his hands. It contained simply these lines:

"But were the case your own, uncle?"

"Why, I should forgive them certainly——There are many allowances to be made——The parties are young—have loved each other—The *heart, Claude, can never be controlled!*"

"Fool! fool! dupe that I have been!" exclaimed Mr. Rivers. "Forgive them! *no*—never!"

There was a light tap at the door—the arms of Jessie were around his neck, and Claude had seized his hand.

"Ah, dear guardy, forgive us!" cried Jessie.

"Dear uncle, pardon!" said Claude.

In vain Mr. Rivers strove to free himself—he turned from the beautiful, humid eyes of Jessie, but he met the fine manly countenance of his nephew—he turned again to Jessie—again to Claude—and, finally, perfectly subdued, he folded his arms around them and exclaimed:

"Well, well, my children, I forgive you—I have been fairly duped! yes, I forgive you."

The consequence was, Mr. Rivers concluded that the Parisian business, which he had considered of so much importance a few days previous, might now be deferred for awhile—and the next day the trio returned happy to the Grove.

I must beg the reader's kind feelings for my little heroine—she was a naughty girl, I acknowledge—but then Claude was such a *tease!* and as Mr. Rivers (himself the only aggrieved party) has forgiven her, will you not extend to her the same indulgence?

A Cow in a Box—*alias, a Cough in the Chest.*—We were not a little amused at the Phonographic exhibition the other evening, by a story told by Professor Church, with reference to the difficulty he had to meet in learning to pronounce the English language, whose barbarous orthography is so totally at variance with its elementary sounds. The gentleman said that the first time he ever visited London he caught a violent cold on the passage. He had studied English at the French University, and made about as much progress in giving correct sounds to the words as a green Yankee might be supposed to do in the French tongue with nothing but a dictionary for a guide. Some things he knew and some he did'nt know; one thing, however, he felt, and that was that he needed a physician to cure his cold. Accordingly he sent for one; and, in the interim, wishing to show Dr. John Bull how well he could talk English, he took Nugent and found that "*toux*" was "*cough*," in the latter tongue.

"C-o-u-g-h," spelled the Frenchman, "how they say that? I have him!—P-l-o-u-g-h is *plow*, and c-o-u-g-h is *cow*. I got a cow!"

The doctor entered, and began to feel his pulse, where all seemed right.

"I have no trouble dare," said Prof. Church, putting his hand to his throat; "*I got a cow.*"

"Well, I am not a cow-doctor!" said the surgeon, indignantly; "why do you send for me to see your cow."

"But you will not understand me," said the disconcerted Frenchman, "here is my cow—here!" and he thumped his breast in desperation.

The doctor shook his head as though he thought him demented. The Professor again had recourse to his dictionary, thinking if he got the precise locality of his cow, the doctor would understand. Accordingly he looked for the word "*chest*," and found the first definition to be "*a box*;" then shouting as loud as he could, he exclaimed:

"Now you understand, *I got a cow in my box!*"

The doctor burst into a roar of laughter, and the poor Frenchman almost died of chagrin.—*Boston Bee.*

A Thief's Revenge.—Judge Wilson sentenced a criminal last week, at the Huntington County Sessions, to five years' solitary confinement in the penitentiary, for burglary and larceny. During the following night he broke jail, went to the Judge's lodgings, and stole the Judge's hat and a pair of new boots.

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