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SELECTED TALES.

THE FIRE-FLY;
OR, JUSTICE TRIUMPHANT.

A poor woman, named Mary, was sitting one evening near her window, her pensive looks wandering over the beautiful orchard which surrounded her cottage. It was during the intense heat of summer. She had worked all day, and when the sun began to sink had gathered into one heap the fragrant hay which had been mown in the morning from her orchard. The last rays of the setting sun cast their purple tints over the horrizon; the bright moonbeams streamed through the cabin window, trellised with vine branches, and the circular forms of the panes were distinctly marked on the white floor of the room. Little Ferdinand, six years of age, was leaning on the window-seat beside his mother. His sweet countenance bore the appearance of health and innocence. The moonlight played among his long, curling hair, and shone on the white collar of his shirt and scarlet jacket.

Poor Mary had sat down to rest herself, but her heart was sorrowful, and her mental sufferings were more overwhelming than the fatigues of the day. She sat down to suppe; a bowl of milk was on the table, but she could scarcely taste it. Little Ferdinand was also sad, and sat motionless, for he saw his mother plunged in grief. Seeing her weep, he began to cry too, and like her, was unable to eat. The cause of their grief we shall now relate.

Mary had lately become a widow. John, her husband, had died in the spring. He was one of the worthiest young men in the village, and through hard work had succeeded in laying by some of his earnings. He had purchased the cottage and orchard of which we spoke, but this acquisition had obliged him to contract some debts. He had also planted fruit trees, which already produced excellent fruit. Although Mary was an orphan without fortune, he had married her for the good education she had received. She had also distinguished herself above the other young girls of the village by her piety and gentleness, her diligence at work, and irreproachable morals. The husband and wife lived in the most perfect harmony, when an epidemic ravaged the country, and John, attacked by the contagious malady, was carried off in a few days. His poor Mary had lavished the most tender cares on him, and scarely were her eyes closed ere she herself was attacked with the same fever which had brought him to the grave. She was near following him, and recovered but slowly.

Her own and her husband's illness had thrown her considerably in arrears, and, to add to her misfortunes, she suddenly saw herself menaced with the loss of her little cottage. John had for a length of time worked for a rich farmer in the neighborhood. The latter, touched with his fidelity and zeal, and desirous to reward him, advanced him the sum of eight hundred francs, to help to purchase a cottage and small garden.—John was to pay it back by a hundred francs, a year, half in money and half in daily labor.

He had been very exact in paying his benefactor, and when death took him from his wife and son, his debt amounted to no more than a hundred francs. Mary was well aware of all these circumstances; but, the farmer dying himself a victim to the same epidemic, his daughter and son-in-law inherited his property. Among his papers was the bill for eight hundred francs, signed in John's hand writing. This acknowledgment fell into the hands of his successors, who, never having heard any mention of the affair, exacted from Mary the reimbursement of the whole sum. The poor widow in consternation affirmed, and called God to witness, that her husband had paid his debt, with the exception of a hundred francs. But she had no proof: she was treated as an impudent liar, and the young farmer summoned her before the court. Mary was sentenced to pay the entire sum, which was declared due. The poor woman possessed nothing but her cottage and orchard; no other resource remained but to sell them. She threw herself at the farmer's feet, and conjured him to have compassion on her. The little orphan, Ferdinand, joined with his mother, and weeping, embraced the knees of this harsh and cruel man. All was in vain. The forced sale was to take place in the morning. It had just been announced to the unfortunate widow by a peasant from across the hedge, while she was working in her orchard; and this it was which had caused her such bitter sorrow.

Casting her eyes first towards heaven, and then on her dear Ferdinand, she burst into tears. Her look became fixed, and a painful silence expressed still more than her tears the emotion of her soul. "O, my God," said she to herself, "this very day, then, is the last that I shall ever make hay in this orchard; those plumbs, which I have plucked for my Ferdinand, are the last fruits which my poor child will gather from these trees, planted for him by his father, and cultivated with so much care. This is, perhaps, the last night which we shall pass under this roof; to-morrow evening our house will be in possession of another, and the poor orphan and his mother will not know where to lay their heads."

At this thought her heart again overflowed, and the tears rolled down her cheeks.

At this moment, Ferdinand, who until now had sat quietly weeping, and looking at his mother, approached her, and said, "Mamma, don't fret so, or I shan't be able to talk to you; do not cry; you know what my papa said to us when he was so ill in bed, just before his death. 'God,' said he, pressing our hands, 'is the protector of the widow, and the father of the orphan: pray to him in all our wants. He will have pity on you.' These were my papa's words; are they not true?"

"Yes, my child," said his mother, whose feelings were calmed by these words.

"Well, then," replied Ferdinand, "why do you feel sorrowful? Pray to God, mamma; he will come to our aid. When I was with papa in the forest while he was cutting wood, I had not long to cry whenever any thing happened to me; if I was hungry, if I was pierced with a thorn, I went to him at once; I asked him for bread, or begged him to take out the thorn which pained me—he always left his axe to give me food, or dress my wound. God is like papa; he is not hard-hearted and unfeeling, like that rich man who repulses us, and turned us out of doors when we went to throw ourselves on our knees before him. Yet God is much richer than this man: look out of the window—see the moon and stars—all are his, the whole world is his, papa always said so. We must not weep so mamma: come, let us pray to God, he will surely aid us; begin, I will pray with you. You will see if we do not succeed better than with the rich man."

"You are right, dear child," replied his mother, shedding sweeter tears, and pressing her son to her heart; for the child's words brought comfort to her mind.

Mary, too, was consoled; she clasped her hands, and raised her eyes, bathed in tears, to heaven. Following her example, Ferdinand also joined his little hands, and turned his look towards heaven. The moonbeams fell on the figure of the mother and child, and the tears in their eyes sparkled like dew-drops. Mary prayed, and Ferdinand repeated each word.

"O, our Father," said she, "listen to the prayer of a poor widow and an unhappy orphan. We are in great affliction: we have no refuge in this world. But thou art our Father; we call on thee in our necessity. Deliver us, and let not injustice deprive us of this cottage. Nevertheless, thy will be done. If it be thy intention to send us this trial, give us also, O Lord! strength to bear it meekly. Do not permit our hearts to be too severely wrung when driven from our house, and having reached the summit of the hill we turn to take a last look at it. Teach us to profit by our sufferings. Grant only that we may find a place of refuge, however wretched, we shall be happy if the Holy Spirit is with us."

Mary's emotion prevented her continuing. Her eyes were fixed upward with a mingled expression of hope and sorrow. Ferdinand stood by her side, his hands firmly clasped, when he suddenly cried out, while he pointed at something with his finger. "Mamma, mamma, look! what is that little bright star coming towards the window? How pretty it is! O, mamma! 'tis just like the stars of heaven. It is coming into the room. See, see, mamma, it has risen as high as the ceiling. How curious!"

"It is a fire-fly," said his mother; "by day-light its appearance is not extraordinary, but at night it shines, as you see, with a beautiful lustre."

"Mamma," said the little boy, "can I take hold of it without danger? Will not its light burn like fire?"

"It will not harm you," answered his mother, smiling at the artless and childish joy of her son; "take it in your hand to examine it more closely. This insect is another wonder of the Creator's power."

Nothing more was wanting to make Ferdinand forget all his sorrows. He ran to catch the fire-fly, which hovered about the room, now taking refuge on the chairs, and then on the table. But at the very instant that his little hand was on the point of seizing the brilliant insect, it disappeared between a large press and the wall. The child stooped down to look under the press.

"I see it very well," said he, "just close to the wall; its light shines all around it, and one would take it for the moonlight, it is so bright and clear. But I can't reach it; my arm is too short."

"Wait a moment," said his mother, "it will not be long before it comes out."

Ferdinand waited a moment. However, he was very anxious that his mother would help him catch the fire-fly.

"Dear mamma," said he, in a gentle voice, as he approached her, "do make it come out, or just draw the press a little from the wall, and I can easily get it."

Mary rose, and did as he desired.—The little boy took the fire-fly in the hollow of his hand, and began to examine it with the greatest attention; he was beside himself with joy; he was happier than a king.

In the meantime Mary was very differently occupied. At the moment she drew away the press she heard something fall on the ground, that had been fixed between it and the wall. She knelt down to pick it up, and as she rose up, screamed out, "O, thou good God, thou art, then, come to our assistance. Here is last year's Almanac, which I have so long and vainly sought. I can now prove that my husband paid the sum which has been demanded with so much cruelty and injustice. Who could have supposed it would be found behind this press, which was bought with the house, and which has not, perhaps, been displaced since the cottage was built.

Mary hastened to light a candle, and read, while tears of joy streamed from her eyes, the journal in which her husband had entered every important matter; and there she found detailed in full the different payments which he had made, whether in money or daily labor, of the sum which he still owed at the commencement of the year. At the end of the calendar was found the following receipt: "On St. Martin's day I have regulated my account with John Blumn, who now owes me only a hundred francs."

Mary, almost beside herself with joy, clapped her hands, snatched up her child, and pressed him to her bosom. "Ferdinand," said she, "my dear Ferdinand, thank the good Lord, we shall not go away?"

"It is I who am the occasion of that," said the child, kissing his kind mother, "am I not, dear mamma? If I had not begged of you to draw out the press, you would not have found the calendar."

Mary was quite overcome. She sat motionless for some time, and after she had in some degree recovered from the effects of her surprise and joy, she retired to rest with her child.

The next morning, her heart swelling with gratitude, she took her little boy by the hand, and repaired to the house of the magistrate, to whom she related all the particulars of the previous evening, and how the little fire-fly had proved, as it were, an index to point out the spot in which her husband's calendar lay concealed. The worthy magistrate was much interested in her story, and immediately sent for the young farmer, to whom he in turn mentioned the circumstances. The young man instantly recognized the signature of his father-in-law, and expressed the deepest sorrow at having been the cause of so cruelly injuring a poor, unprotected widow, and addressing Mary with much feeling, asked for forgiveness, telling her, as a proof of his sincerity, that he would willingly excuse the payment of the remaining francs; and that, should she ever stand in need of assistance, he would always prove her friend.

Deep and overpowering were the feelings which possessed poor Mary's heart as, accompanied by her dear boy, she retraced her steps, and at length came in sight of the beloved cottage, now once more her own; and many and heartfelt were the thanks-givings that ascended to her Heavenly Father who had thus designed in so wonderful a manner to make a poor insect the means of turning her sorrow into joy.

AGRICULTURAL.

Raising Pork.—Every farmer knows full well that if he has to winter his pigs even in the most fertile of corn countries, and cannot get over three cents per pound for the pork, he is losing money; how important then that he keeps such a breed of swine, and feeds them so well, that he can bring the pigs dropped early in the spring, to weigh from 200 to 300 lbs. in December and January. Let people say what they will about the necessity of having old hogs to make a thick cut of clear pork on the ribs for packing, we know this is all gammon. We have seen many a pig fed well from his birth, that would weigh full 250 lbs. and cut four inches thick of clear pork on his sides at nine to ten months old, and have heard of others weighing 300 lbs. and cutting five inches. Our best market for pork is England, and the people there prefer it from hogs weighing not over 175 to 200 lbs. and like the lean well mixed with the fat. We would never winter any thing but breeders of the swine family, and the moment the pigs were dropped, we would commence shoving them with feed till ready for the knife. The farmer who pursues this course will make from 30 to 60 per cent. more on his pork than those who winter their spring pigs. As for autumn pigs, we would not have them. Let the sows breed but once a year.

Three or four years ago we prophesied that the low price of pork would soon make it scarce, and now it is a fact; and by and by, when choice boars will be wanted to improve the breed, they cannot be had, for our farmers are growing careless again in their stock, and breeding helter skelter in every direction. A pig is getting to be a pig once more with them—long nose or short—sharp back or round. We advise all those who have good hogs to keep them so. Don't fat and sell the best, keep them for breeders, and fat and sell the poorest. In this way one will be continually improving, and in any he will have a good breed on hand always ready for his own use and the benefit of a careless neighbor.—*American Agriculturalist.*

A Secret for a Farmer's Wife. While the milking of your cows is going on let your pans be placed in a kettle of boiling water. Strain the milk in to one of the pans taken hot from the kettle, and cover the same with another of these hot pans, and proceed in like manner with the whole mess of milk, and you will find that you will have double the quantity of good rich cream, and that you will get double the quantity of sweet delicious butter. Try it.

Remedy for Cut-Worms.—A friend informs us that he tried the recommendation given in our Genesee Farmer a year or since, for the prevention of injury to garden plants, by cut-worms, and succeeded perfectly. It is simply mixing salt with a little ashes (salt alone will do,) and dropping it around the stems of the plants (of cabbage, &c.)—He says he found that a tea-spoonful of salt to a plant did no perceptible injury, but on the contrary, it effectually protected them from worms, and served to promote their growth by causing moisture about the roots in the time of drought. Try it, readers—carefully, on garden plants and Indian corn, where exposed to worms: but don't use salt too liberally, or it may do mischief.—*Ohio Cultivator.*

Every man should take a newspaper. We were strongly impressed with the truth of this a few days since, as a friend related the circumstance of a mechanic being applied to, to purchase a recipe for some preparation necessary in his business, and which was a great improvement. The man readily purchased it and paid five dollars. Meeting a few days after, an editor of a paper, he related the fact, and seemed delighted with the treasure. I can tell you how you could have done better, said the editor. I published the same recipe several weeks since; and had you taken my paper you would have received all that benefit, and a great deal more, and made a saving of three dollars. The man looked much surprised, and immediately subscribed, determined that he would share out the benefit of one paper devoted to his interests. Do thou likewise.—*Mechanic.*

"Death is the wages of sin." That's poor pay. We wonder that more people don't quit sinning, and stand out for higher wages.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A Faithful Dog.—Some years since, a family residing in one of the Southern states possessed a Newfoundland dog which conceived a strong friendship for the little daughter of its owner. This child he used to escort regularly to school, carrying her satchel in his mouth, and was generally at the door when the hours of her penance were over, to trot along by her side homeward.

One day, the girl, having strayed away without the knowledge of her parents, sauntered along to the water, and was amusing herself by walking upon the string pieces of a pier. The dog, as usual, was her only attendant, and seemed to watch her pranks with much attention and considerable uneasiness.—Frequently warned by various persons upon the wharf, to keep farther from the edge, she nevertheless, with juvenile waywardness, continued her dangerous pastime, until finally missing her footing, she fell into the water. Instantly the neighborhood was in an uproar; some ran to loosen a boat, others flung boards into the stream, and a sailor present stripped off his jacket and shoes for a plunge after the little cast away.

But Towser fully comprehended the matter at a glance, and before it was fairly known that she was in peril, was by the side of his young mistress, and seized her by her floating dress and was paddling back with his precious burthen to the wharf. The generous Jack tar had now only to leap into a ship's yawl hard by, and pull both of the dripping creatures into it, and deposit them upon the dock in safety.

Towser, of course, became more than ever a favorite with the family, and held a very enviable rank above others of his species. As his mistress increased in strength and statue she was never allowed to forget the debt of gratitude due her canine companion, although she had outgrown the necessity of calling upon him for farther services, so that he slept and grew fat upon his laurels, like, some old soldier, whose youthful privations and evidences of valor have procured him a pension for the remainder of his pilgrimage.

Some five years after this occurrence, the family had resolved upon changing their place of residence for the city of St. Augustin. The morning of their departure had arrived; the schooner which was to convey them to their new home was casting off from the pier, the very one which had been the scene of Towser's exploit, but he was nowhere to be found. They whistled and called but no dog appeared; the captain became restive, swore he would wait no longer, gave the order, and the craft swept along the waters with a speaking breeze, and was soon a quarter of a mile from the shore.

The girl and her father were standing at the stern of the vessel, looking back upon the city which they had probably left forever, when suddenly Towser was seen running to the edge of the wharf with something in his mouth. With a glass they discovered that his master's pocket handkerchief, which had been somewhere dropped upon the road down to the vessel, and which he recollected, with some compunctions of conscience, that he had sent his shaggy servant to look after.

The dog looked piteously around upon the by-standers, then at the retracing vessel, and leaped boldly into the water. His master immediately pointed out the noble brute to the captain, and requested him to throw his vessel in the wind until the animal could near them; he also offered a large sum if he would drop his boat and pick him up, told him of the manner in which he had preserved the life of his daughter and again offered him the price of a passage if he would save the faithful creature. The girl joined her entreaties with those of her father, went and implored that her early friend might be rescued; but the captain was a savage; he was deaf to every appeal of humanity—kept obstinate on his course, and the better animal of the two followed the vessel, until his strength exhausted, and his generous heart chilled by despair, he sank among the merciless billows.

By heaven! we would have thrown the captain overboard!—*Boston Advertiser.*

Ague and Fever.—We have been furnished by a friend, says the Baltimore American, with the following recipe, which is said to have proved very beneficial in cases of ague and fever:

Red bark, ½ oz; powdered snake root, 20 grains; salts of Wormwood, 15 grains. Mix and divide into three equal parts.—Take one dose at night in wine or molasses, one the next morning, and one the succeeding night. Care must be had not to take the mixture until the fever has subsided.

A Beautiful Thought.—How few men seem to have formed a conception of the original dignity of their nature, or the exalted design of their creation. Regarding themselves only as the creatures of time, endowed merely with animal passions and intellectual faculties, their projects, aims and expectations are circumscribed by the narrow limits of human life. They forget that instability and decay are written, as with a sun beam, upon earthly objects—that this world, with all its pageantry of pomp and power, is crumbling into the dust—that this life is scarcely deserving of a single thought, excepting as it forms the introduction to another, and that he alone acts a prudent or rational part, who frames his plans with direct reference to that future and endless state of being. Sin has blinded the understanding, and debased the affections that men never fail to invest some temporal good with fancied perfection, and idly imagine that the attainment of it would satisfy the desires and fill the capacities of the immortal spirit. Vain thought!—How little they know themselves! The soul is not of the earth, and they will strive in vain to chain it to the dust.—Though its native strength, has been impaired, and its purity tarnished, and its "glory changed," it will always be a prisoner here. Send it forth, if you will, to range through the whole material universe, and like the dove dismissed from the ark, it will return without finding a single place to rest—for it has no resting place but the bosom of God.—*Maffit.*

A Wife.—When a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion whom he wants, not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint and play, sing and dance, it is a being who can comfort and console him; one who can reason and reflect, and feel, and judge, and discourse, and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his sorrow, purify his joys, strengthen his principles and educate his children. Such is the woman who is fit for a mother and the mistress of a family. A woman of the former description occasionally figures in the drawing-room, and attracts the admiration of the company, but is entirely unfit for the helpmate of a man, and to train up a child in the way he should go.

Good Advice.—Girls beware of transient young men—never suffer the address of a stranger;—recollect one good farmer's boy or industrious mechanic is worth more than all the floating trash in the world; the allurements of a dandy Jack with a walking stick in his paw, some honest tailor's coat on his back, and a brainless though fancy skull never can make up the loss of a kind father's home—a good mother's counsel, and the society of brothers and sisters—their affections lost—while that of the young man is lost at the wane of a honeymoon. Tis true.

Miseries of Indolence.—None so little enjoy life, and are such burthens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do—who knows not what it is to enjoy. Recreation is only valuable as it unbends us. The idler knows nothing of it. It is exertion that renders rest delightful, and sleep sweet and undisturbed. That the happiness of life depends on the regular prosecution of some laudable purpose of lawful calling, which engages, helps, and enlivens all powers, let those bear witness who, after spending years in active usefulness, retire to enjoy themselves. They are a burthen to themselves.—*Jay.*

Mexico.—The New York Courier and Enquirer says: "We hear as a rumor, which we have reason to think has some probability—that the Congress of Mexico has voted *three millions of dollars* towards carrying on the war against Texas, and that money has actually been furnished by some commercial house or houses in Mexico. This would indicate a settled purpose to prevent, if possible, the annexation of that country to the United States—a purpose which, we are assured on the same authority whence we derive the other information, all men of all parties, and indeed without any distinction of party, earnestly cherish."

A lady in this town was delivered of three healthy boys on Monday last.—They are all, we are rejoiced to hear, doing well. We often hear of two girls and a boy at one birth, and sometimes of two boys and a girl, but three boys *carry off the palm.*—*Concord Patriot.*

Tennessee.—The election in Tennessee takes place on the first Thursday (7th) of August next. A Governor, eleven members of Congress, and members of the Sate Legislature, to be chesen.

113