Family Circle.

Quaker Justice.

"Samuel, has thee given in all thy property?"

Samuel was embarrassed, and a look of conscious guilt passed over his face, which the shirpeye under the gray broad brim did not lose.

"Truly, I kept back some personal property: a watch, my chest of tools and my books," he replied, with hesitation.

"Thy creditors would not take these from thee; thou knowest that; wherefore it is not of these things I would ask; but if thee has other property either in lands, or money, or bonds, which rightfully belong to thy creditors, and Friends, thee will not receive the benefit of the act, I warn thee, whether thee is minded so to do or not, in the sight of the Lord, to make a full surrender of all thy property, that thou withhold nothing, taking heed to the inward teaching which counsels honesty towards all men, rendering unto each his due."

Again the look of guiltiness flashed over Samuel's face as he said: "But do thee regard the interest of strangers above that of thy own brethren, in preference to that of the world's people?"

"Nay," replied the elder Friend, "I look most nearly at the interest of my own brethren, when I see, myself lest the sin of dishonesty rest in the heart of one of them. And in such case I would prepare him for the honor of the Friends, and thereby the clearing of his own soul, that he put away the evil thought from his mind."

Then the spirit moved Friend Ephrahan to say no more; and the meeting ended thus in silence.

Friend Samuel was a Quaker of great worth and religious fervor, for such manifest gifts of the Spirit, that, notwithstanding his youth, he was already a preacher, a preacher respected and beloved. But the young man had not been held aloof from the temptations of sundry speculations which, promising well, performed exceedingly ill, and left him suddenly with more debts than money. So he had made over his property to his creditors, and declared himself bankrupt.

The days passed by until the hour for the fourth-day meeting came, and found the plain meeting-house filled with the usual number of first-colored, broad-brimmed hats, and ugly, poking bonnets, covering pretty, plain faces. Faces from which, young, as well as old, the fire and passions of life seemed gone, leaving a quiet, cheerful content in their place.

"Friend Samuel, has thee given in all thy property?" questioned Friend Ephrahan again, rising in his place.

But now Friend Samuel's face was bowed with shame and repentance, burning with a color unknown to Quaker principles.

"Nay; verily, I have been guilty in this matter, thinking in my weakness and wickedness, like Ananias, to keep back part of the price. Now may the Spirit, which I have slighted, forgive me this great wrong; for, tempted of the adversary, I confess with shame-facedness and humility, that I did deliberately withdraw the sum of five hundred dollars from my bank account, before giving in the inventory, putting the same to the credit of my wife, that she might not be quite penniless in this time of my adversity."

Friend Samuel sank into his seat, and covered his face like one overcome with bitterest sorrow and humiliation; and there was silence in the meeting for the space of half an hour.

Then Friend Ephrahan arose. "I am moved to say that, although Friend Samuel may not, for a time, at least, sit in the seat of the preachers, we should look upon him, it as an erring brother, yet as a brother beloved. The spirit witnesseth with my spirit that his sorrow is of the godly sort, which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. And I am also moved to say that, for the honor and honesty of the body of Friends, we, of the meeting, should straightway make up the deficit of this debt; that the creditors be forthwith paid in full, and so this community suffer no taint or suspicion of fraud."

"Yea, verily, Friend Ephrahan speaketh the mind, as I am moved to think, of us all," said Friend Ephriam.

And so, as it proved, he did. The debt was paid in full, and Friend Samuel, sitting meekly in the lowest place, waited in humbleness of heart and of manner until his evident repentance wrought out for him, at last, restoration to the preacher's seat, which he never again dishonored.

"That was very noble!" said the world's people. "The religion which brings forth fruit like this is real, however long the pauses may be between the praying in their meetings."

Thus Quaker justice preserved the honor of the Friends, and saved a soul from sin.—*Church Register.*

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