

RUINED HOMES.

Unhappy Marriages and Their Effects Discussed—Why Marriage Will Become Unpleasant.

It is related of a certain old cynic that when one of his juniors was introduced to him he would ask: "Are you married?" If the answer was in the affirmative, his comment was: "Lucky dog!"

It is a dreadful ending to a drama which opened with so much happy promise. There was a lovely young bride, crowned with the delicate flowers which were emblems of her sweetness and purity.

In the nature of things, this cannot always be. No more is it possible that one should always bear the weight of a grief which bows one at the side of a death-bed.

This is all very miserable. It seems more miserable because we involuntarily contrast the conclusion with the lovely picture of the beginning. In all the wide world there is no place so horrible as a home in which husband and wife are at odds.

It is evident that many marriages are not founded on love and respect. Some are contracted like business partnerships; some are entered upon out of pique; and not a few marry without any adequate notion of the binding nature of the obligations so lightly assumed.

Reminiscence of Nellie Grant's Wedding. When Mrs. Sartoris, radiant with happiness, had gone from home and kindred to cross the ocean and find new ties with strangers, her wedding robe and veil were the last articles to be put away in one of those zinc packing-boxes that was used to preserve her silks from the effects of a sea voyage.

Charity Green's Gifts.

"Double fold, and only five cents a yard. It was the cheapest piece of plaid I ever laid my eyes on!" exclaimed to herself Miss Charity Green, the old maid tailor of Allantown, and she unfolded the three-dollar bank-note which she had received the day before for a week and a half's sewing at the Squire's, and smoothed the ragged corners, and looked at it affectionately.

"Six yards'll make me a full dress, and I must have it to wear at cousin Nathan's, as they've sent me their usual invitation to Christmas dinner. I guess I'll step over and get the stuff at once and run up the breadths this evening, as I've got all them buttons on Joseph Blake's new coat to make to-morrow, and I've no time to let grass grow under my feet."

Miss Charity Green was a very poor woman who lived by her needle, and in widow Blake's small one-story house. She had a thin, faded face, with nothing pretty or attractive about it, except when she smiled, and then little children would be sure to forget all about the wrinkles and the homeliness, and tangle her spoils of thread and play with the scissors, which always hung around her neck, fastened with black ribbon, and never dream of stopping or being in the least alarmed by her frequent, "There, there, children! Dear me! I do believe little hands are the busiest in the world! Who ever did see!"

Poor Miss Charity Green! She was that very sad spectacle, a lonely, almost friendless woman, without father or mother, brother or sister, husband or children in the world. Her life was turning its face toward half a century of years; her health, never vigorous, was gradually failing her; and a cold, lonely old age rose up sometimes and appalled her with its chill and gloom.

"Come in, Johnnie; what do you want?" said Miss Charity Green. And if you had heard her voice just then you would have understood something of the secret of her being so general a favorite with children.

"Mother wants to know, Miss Green, if you'll lend her a drawin' o' tea. She'll pay you to-morrow."

"Well, Johnnie, you all goin' to have a merry Christmas at your house?"

"I don't know," said the boy in a disconsolate tone of voice, twisting his brown fingers in and out of each other.

"What'll you be doin'?"

"Oh! it's that you? Do come in, Miss Green," and the little pale, sorrowful, care-worn Mrs. Russell lifted her head from the child's stocking she was darning as her neighbor entered the room.

"Little folks all abed!" whispered Miss Green, as she came into the room with something carefully concealed under her shawl.

Effects of Breathing Poul Air.

The air we breathe, which a great English physician calls gaseous food, may become impure to the degree of being indigestible to our lungs and utterly unfit for the performance of functions which are quite as important as Dull, headache, nausea, loss of appetite and of the sense of smell, and the sadness produced by the unsatisfied hunger after oxygen, are only incidental and secondary evils; the great principal cause of the troglodyte habit is its influence on the respiratory organs.

"Well, I do say now, Miss Russell," said her neighbor, attempting in awkward but sincere fashion to comfort her. "Don't give up so. It ain't much, I know, but then we all had to be children once."

"Yes, Miss Green, and it's just the thought of that and the good times we used to have when I was a wild, careless gal at father's that's e'en a-most broke my heart ever since I told the children they mustn't expect to hang up their stockings this Christmas. You never did see children so put down in your life; they ain't hardly smiled since, and it's seemed as though we'd had a funeral in the house when I put 'em to bed to-night."

"Well, s'pose now you jest get their stockings and we'll slip them in, and you can pin 'em up to the bed-post, you know."

"Bless their hearts!" said Miss Green. "There ain't no use o' tryin' to get this drum inside."

"No, I'll jest set it on the mantle. Dear me! I expect I shan't know whether my head's off or on to-morrow mornin' about seven o'clock."

"I don't know how to thank you, Miss Green, but you have remembered the widow and the fatherless, and be sure God will remember it of you."

"Merry Christmas—merry Christmas, Miss Green!" The voices, the bright, eager, children's voices, were outside the door and inside the room all in a breath.

"We're goin' to play company this afternoon," said Ellen, "and I'm goin' to set out my tea-set and—"

"And I'm goin' to be a soldier jest come home from the wars," said Johnnie; and here he struck on his drum so loud that Miss Green put her hands to her ears, exclaiming: "Oh, children, for all the world! What a clash you do make!" but her face was full of smiles all the time.

Miss Charity Green wore her old black silk dress to her cousin's Christmas dinner. It looked gray and shabby, it is true; but she would not have felt half so happy in the richest velvet that ever adorned the figure of an empress.

A Simple Method of Ventilating Rooms.

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