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Oxford Democrat

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Poetry.

Submission.

BY CELIA TRAXLER.

The sparrow sits and sings, and sings;
Softly the sunset's lingering light
Lies over rock and turf,
And reddens where the restless surf
Tosses on high its plumes of white.

Gently and clear the sparrow sings,
While twilight steals across the sea,
And still and bright the evening-star
Twinkles above the golden bar
That in the west lies quietly.

Oh, steadfastly the sparrow sings,
And sweet the sound; and sweet the touch
Of wooing winds; and sweet the sight
Of happy Nature's deep delight
In her fair spring, desired so much!

But while so clear the sparrow sings,
A cry of death is in my air;
The crashing of the riven wreck
Breaks that sweep the shuddering deck,
And sounds of agony and fear.

How is it that the birds can sing?
Is life so full of bitter pain?
Hearts are so wrung with hopeless grief?
Wee is so long and joy so brief?
Nor shall the lost return again.

Though rapturously the sparrow sings,
No bliss of Nature can restore
The friends whose hands I clasped so warm,
Sweet souls that through the night and storm
Fled from the earth for evermore.

Yet still the sparrow sits and sings,
Till longing, mourning, sorrowing love,
Groping to find what hope may be
With death's dark and awful mystery,
Reaches its empty arms above.

And, listening, while the sparrow sings,
And soft the evening shadows fall,
Sees, through the crowding tears that blind,
A little light, and seems to find
And clasp God's hand, who wrought it all.

—Hester's Monty.

Selected Story.

THE
ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

BY F. S. AUTHOR.

"Is there a good fire in the little spare room, June?" said Mr. Wade, a plain country farmer, coming into the kitchen where his good wife was busy preparing for supper.

"Oh, yes, I've made the room as comfortable as can be," replied Mrs. Wade; "but I wish you would take up a good amount of wood now, so that we won't have to disturb Mr. N—, by going into the room after he gets here."

"If he should come this evening," remarked the husband. "But it is getting late, and I'm sure he won't be here before the morning."

"Oh, I guess he will be along soon. I have left all day as if he were coming."

"They say he is a good man and preaches most powerfully. Mr. Jones heard him preach in New York at the last conference, and tells me he never heard such a sermon as he gave them. It cut right and left, and his words went home to every heart like arrows of conviction."

"I hope he will be here this evening," remarked the wife as she put some cakes in the oven.

"And so do I," remarked Mr. Wade, as he turned away and went out to the wood pile for an armful of wood for the expected minister's room.

It was Saturday afternoon and nearly sundown. Mr. N—, who was expected to arrive, and for whose comfort every preparation in their power to make, had been completed by the family at whose house he was to stay, was the new Presiding Elder of the B— District, in the New Jersey Conference. Quarterly meeting was to be held on the next day, which was Sunday, when Mr. N— was to preach, and administer the ordination of the church. Being his first visit to that part of the District, the preacher was known to but few of the members, and they all looked forward to his arrival with interest, and were prepared to welcome him with respect and affection.

The house of Mr. Wade was known as the "minister's home." For years, in their movements through the circuit, the preachers as they came round to this part in the field of their appointed labor, were welcomed by brother and sister Wade, and the little spare chamber made comfortable for their reception. It was felt by these honest-hearted people more a privilege that a duty, thus to share in their temporal blessings with the men of God who ministered to them in holy things. They had their weaknesses, as we all have. One of their weaknesses consisted in a firm belief that they were deeply imbued with the genuine religion, and regarded things spiritual above all worldly considerations. They were kind, good people, certainly, but not as deeply read in the lore of their own hearts, nor as familiar with the secret springs of their own actions, as all of us should desire to be. But this was hardly to be wondered at as their positions in the church were rather elevated as compared with those around them, and they were the subjects of little distinguishing marks, flattering to the natural man.

While Mr. Wade was splitting a log at the wood pile, his thought on the new Presiding Elder, and his feelings warm with the anticipated pleasure of meeting and entertaining him, a man of common appearance approached along the road, and when he came to where the farmer was, stood still and looked at him until he had finished cutting the log, and was preparing to lift the cleft pieces in his

arms. "Rather a cold day this," said the man. "Yes, rather," returned Mr. Wade, a little indifferently, and in a voice meant to repulse the stranger, whose appearance did not impress him favorably.

"How far is it to D—?" inquired the man.

"Three miles," replied Mr. Wade, who having filled his arms with wood, was beginning to move towards the house.

"So far?" said the man in a tone that was slightly marked with hesitation. "I thought it was but a little way from this."

Then with an air of hesitation, and speaking in a respectful voice, he added, "I would feel obliged if you would let me go in and warm myself. I have walked for two miles in the cold, and as D— is still three miles off, I shall be chilled through before I get there."

So modest and natural a request as this Mr. Wade could not refuse, and yet, in the way he said—"Oh, certainly"—there was a manner that clearly betrayed his wish that the man had passed on and preferred his request somewhere else.

Whether this was noticed or not, is of no consequence, the wayfarer, on this assent to his request, followed Mr. Wade into the house.

"Jane," said the farmer as he entered the house with the stranger, and his voice was not as cordial as it might have been, "let this man warm him by the fire. He has to go all the way to D— this evening and says he is cold."

There is a kind of magnetic intelligence in the tones of the voice. Mrs. Wade understood perfectly, by the way in which this was said, that the husband did not feel much sympathy for the stranger, and only yielded the favor asked because he could not well refuse to grant it. Her own observation did not correct the impression her husband's manner had produced. The men's dress though neither dirty nor ragged, was not calculated to impress one favorably.

His hat was much worn, and the old gray coat, in which he was buttoned up to the chin, had seen so much service that it was literally threadbare from collar to skirt, and showed numerous patches, darts, and other evidences of needful use applied long since to its original manufacture. His cowhide boots, though whole, had a coarse look; and his long dark beard gave his face, not a very prepossessing one at best, a not very attractive aspect.

"You can sit down there," said Mrs. Wade, a little ungraciously, for she felt the presence of the man, just at that particular juncture, as an intrusion; and she pointed to an old chair that stood near the fireplace, in front of which was a large Dutch oven containing some of her best cream short cakes, prepared especially for Mr. N—, the new Presiding Elder now momentarily expected.

"Thank you, ma'am," returned the stranger, as he took the chair, and drew close up to the blazing hearth, and removing his thick woolen gloves, spread his hands to receive the genial warmth.

Nothing more was said by either stranger or Mr. Wade, for the space of three or four minutes. During this time the good housewife passed in and out, once or twice, busy as could be in looking after supper affairs. The lid of the ample Dutch oven had been raised once or twice, and both the eyes and nose of the traveller were greeted with a pleasant token of the good fare soon to be served up in the family.

He was no longer cold; but the sight and smell of cake and other good things in preparation by the lady, awakened a sense of hunger, and made it keenly felt. But, as the comfort of a little warmth had been bestowed so reluctantly, he could not think of trespassing on the farmer and his wife for a bite of supper, and so commenced drawing on his heavy woolen gloves, and buttoning up his old gray coat. While occupied in doing this, Mr. Wade came into the kitchen, and said—

"I'm afraid, Jane, that the minister won't be along this evening. It's after sundown, and begins to grow duskish."

"He ought to have been here an hour ago," returned Mrs. W., in a tone of disappointment.

"It's getting late, my friend, and D—'s a good distance ahead," remarked the farmer, after standing with his back to the fire, and regarding for some moments the stranger, who had taken off his gloves, and was slowly unbuttoning his coat again.

"It's three miles, you say?"

"Yes, good three miles, if not more; and it will be dark in half an hour."

"What direction must I take?" inquired the stranger.

"You keep along the road until you come to a meeting-house on the top of the hill, half a mile beyond this, and then you strike off to the right, and keep straight on."

"What meeting-house is it?"

"The D— Methodist meeting house."

"You are expecting the minister, I think you just now said?"

"Yes, Mr. N—, our new Presiding Elder, is to preach to-morrow, and he was to have been here this afternoon."

"He is to stay with you?"

"Certainly he is. The ministers all stay at my house."

The man got up and went to the door and looked out.

"Couldn't you give me a little something to eat before I go?" he said, returning.

"I haven't tasted food since this morning, and feel a little faint."

"Jane, can't you give him some cold meat and bread?" Mr. Wade turned to his wife, and she answered, just a little fretfully, "Oh, yes, I suppose so;" and going to the cupboard, brought out a dish containing a piece of cold fat bacon that had been boiled with cabbage for dinner, and laid a loaf of bread, which she placed on the kitchen table and told the man to help himself. The stranger did not wait for another invitation; but set to work in good earnest upon the bread and bacon, while the farmer stood with his hands behind him, and his back to the fire, whistling the air of "Auld Lang Syne," while he mentally repeated the words of the hymn "When I Can Read My Title Clear," and wished his visitor would make haste and get through with his supper.

The latter, after eating for a short time with the air of a man whose appetite was keen, began to discuss the meat and bread with more deliberation, and occasionally to ask a question or make a remark, the replies to which were not very gracious, although Mr. Wade forced himself to be as polite as he could be.

The homely meal at length concluded, the man buttoned up his old coat, and drew on his coarse woolen gloves again, and thanking Mr. and Mrs. Wade for their hospitality opened the door and looked out. The wind rushed into his face, cold and piercing. For a moment or two he stood with his hand upon the door, and then closing it he turned back into the house, and said to the farmer—

"You say it is still three miles to D—?"

"I do," said Mr. Wade coldly. "I said so to you when you first stopped, and you ought to have pushed on like a prudent man. You could have reached there before it was quite dark."

"But I was cold and hungry, and might have fainted by the way."

The manner of saying this touched the farmer's feeling a little, and caused him to look more narrowly into the stranger's face than he had yet done. But he saw nothing more than he had already seen.

"You have warmed and fed me, for which I am thankful. Will you not bestow another act of kindness upon one who is in a strange place, and if he goes out in the darkness may lose himself and perish in the cold?"

The peculiar form in which this request was made, and the tone in which it was uttered, put it almost out of the power of the farmer to say no.

"Go in there and sit down," he answered, pointing to the kitchen, "and I will see my wife, and hear what she has to say."

And Mr. Wade went into the parlor where the supper table stood, covered with a snow-white cloth, and displaying his wife's set of blue sprigged china, that was only brought out on special occasions. Two tall mould candles were burning thereon, and on the hearth blazed a cheerful hickory fire.

"Hasn't that old fellow gone yet?" asked Mrs. Wade. She had heard his voice as he returned from the door.

"No. And what do you suppose? He wants us to let him stay all night."

"Indeed, and we'll do no such thing! We can't have the likes of him in the house, no how. Where could he sleep?"

"Not in the best room, even if Mr. N— shouldn't come."

"No, indeed?"

"But I really don't see, Jane, how we can turn him out of doors. He doesn't look like a very strong man, and it's dark and cold, and full three miles to D—."

"It's too much! He ought to have gone on while he had daylight, and not lingered here as he did until it got dark."

"We can't turn him out of doors, Jane, and it's no use to think of it. He'll have to stay now."

"But what can we do with him?"

"He seems like a decent man, at least, and don't look as if he had anything bad about him. We might make him a bed on the floor somewhere."

"I wish he had been to Guinea before he came here," said Mrs. Wade, fretfully. The disappointment, the conviction that Mr. N— would not arrive, and the intrusion of so unwelcome a visitor as the stranger, completely unbalanced his mind.

"Oh, well, Jane," replied her husband in a soothing voice, "never mind. We must make the best of it. Poor man! He came to us tired and hungry, and we have warmed and fed him. He now asks shelter for the night, and we must not refuse him, nor grant his request in a complaining reluctant spirit. You know what the Bible says about entertaining angels unwares."

"Angels! Did you ever see an angel look like him?"

"Having never seen an angel," said the husband smiling, "I am unable to speak as to their appearance."

This had the effect of calling an answering smile to the face of Mrs. Wade, and a better feeling to her heart. And it was finally agreed between them, that the man as he seemed like a decent kind of a person should be permitted to occupy the minister's room, if that individual did not arrive, an event to which they both now looked with but small expectancy. If he did come, why the man would have to put up with poorer accommodations.

When Mr. Wade returned to the kitchen where the stranger had seated himself before the fire, he informed him that they had decided to let him stay all night.

The man expressed in a few words his grateful sense of their kindness, and then became silent and thoughtful. Soon after, the farmer's wife, giving up all

hopes of Mr. N—'s arrival, had supper taken up, which consisted of coffee, warm cream short-cakes, broiled ham and broiled chicken. After all was on the table, a short conference was held as to whether it would do not to invite the stranger to take supper. It was true, they had given him as much bread and bacon as he could eat; but then as long as he was going to stay all night, it looked too inhospitable to sit down to the table and not ask him to join them. So, making a virtue of necessity, he was kindly asked to come in to supper, an invitation which he did not decline. Grace was said over the meal by Mr. Wade, and the coffee was poured out, the bread helped, and the meat served.

There was a fine little boy of some five or six years old at the table, who had been brightened up and dressed in his best in order to grace the minister's reception. Charley was full of talk, and the parents felt a natural pride in showing him off, even before their humble guest, who noticed him particularly, although he had not much to say.

"Come, Charley," said Mr. Wade after the meal was over, and he sat leaning back in his chair, "can't you repeat the pretty hymn mamma learned you last Sunday?"

Charley started off, without further invitation, and repeated, very accurately, two or three verses of a new camp-meeting hymn, that was just then very popular.

"Now let us hear you say the Commandments, Charley," spoke up the mother, well pleased at her child's performance. And Charley repeated them with only the aid of a little prompting.

"How many commandments are there?" asked the father.

The child hesitated, and then looking up at the stranger, near whom he sat, said innocently—

"How many are there?"

The man thought for some moments, and said as if in doubt—

"Eleven, are there not?"

"Eleven?" ejaculated Mrs. Wade, looking up toward the man in unfeigned surprise.

"Eleven?" said her husband, with more of rebuke than astonishment in his voice. "Is it possible, sir, that you do not know how many Commandments there are, Charley, come! Tell me; you know, of course."

"Ten," said the child.

"Right, my son," returned Mr. Wade, with a smile of approval. "Right. Why, there isn't a child of his age within ten miles who can't tell you that there are ten commandments. Did you ever read the Bible sir?" addressing the stranger.

"When I was a little boy, I used to read it sometimes. But I'm sure I thought there were eleven Commandments. Are you not mistaken about there being only ten?"

Sister Wade lifted her hands in unfeigned astonishment, and exclaimed—

"Could any one believe it, such ignorance of the Bible!"

Mr. Wade did not reply, but he arose, and going to one corner of the room where the Good Book lay upon a small mahogany stand, brought it to the table, and pushing away his plate, cup and saucer, laid the volume before him, and opened that portion in which the Commandments are recorded.

"There!" he said, placing his finger upon a proof of the man's error. "There! Look for yourself!"

The man came round from his side of the table, and looked over the farmer's shoulder.

"There! Ten;—d'ye see?"


"Yes, it does say ten," replied the man, "and yet it seems to me there are eleven. I'm sure I have always thought so."

"Doesn't it say ten, here?" inquired Mr. Wade, with marked impatience in his voice.

"It does certainly."

"Well what more do you want? Can't you believe in the Bible?"

"O, yes I believe in the Bible, and yet somehow it strikes me that there must be eleven commandments. Hasn't one been added somewhere else?"



THE GREAT

English Remedy

The Cordial Balm of

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Nervous Debility

However obscure the cause may be, it is tribute to render nervous system a prevalent affliction, as it does, nearly our adult population, it is a victim day by day, and year by year, by the frightful increase of nervous afflictions. Slightest nervousism to the more grave forms of

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Medicines unrivaled for their wonderful
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plaints. Their efficacy is equally good in
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best

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Removing Morbid Sensibility. Degraded Spirit. Hermitic Solitude. Incurable Cough. Package of Cordial Bala containing one of the Tonic Pills, which may also be had singly at 50 cents per box.

RECENT TESTIMONIALS.

PETESWORTH. Nov. 11, 1895. I have used the Tonic Pills and Syrup of Last-year's Tonic Pills is a preventive and the use of ardent spirits and habitude of smoking has been abandoned. I have regarded them as most invaluable medicines, and they could induce me to be a witness for the Lord. MISS C.

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