SLAVE OR WIFE.

"Ten o'clock, and the lunch basket not ready to take to the field—as usual!" grunted Farmer Brewster, as he threw himself into the rocking-chair in the kitchen and fanned his flushed face with his straw hat. "A quarter of an hour wasted very likely, waiting here. Right in the midst of as fine a hay day as a man would wish to see. Now, my mother used to have her lunch ready to the minute whenever we came for it, and I don't see why—"

His jeremiad was checked by the appearance of his wife, who came out of the pantry, tugging along the great lunch basket, almost too heavy for her strength.

Farmer Brewster was a young man, in spite of his grumbling. Only 23, tall, straight, healthy, with blue eyes, rosy cheeks, fair curly hair—and handsome face when it was not darkened, as now, by a scowl of discontent.

An only son, he had inherited a large and handsome farm, clear of mortgage and debt, which supplied all the wants of his house-hold most liberally and gave him a nice little sum of money to deposit in the bank each year.

There was no reason why he should be mean, and yet miserly habits were gradually growing upon him far faster than he knew.

Nor was there need of grumbling over the household arrangements, since the wife of his choice was a farmer's daughter who knew well how to work, and who had taken delight in setting her home in faultless order when first she came as a bride to the pleasant Brewster place.

The same order reigned still from garret to cellar of the square old house but Mrs. Brewster went through her task mechanically now, or with nervous haste and hurry that made them almost unendurable sometimes.

The constant drop of water will wear away a stone; and the constant fault finding in which her husband saw fit to indulge had nearly worn the patience, the hope and the endurance out of the young wife's heart.

The comfort and happiness of that home hung upon a thread, which frayed more and more, hour by hour, under the print of unmerited blame. Yet George Brewster saw nothing of this until the morning of which I write.

"There is the lunch, and it is exactly five minutes past ten," said Mrs. Brewster, setting the basket down with some emphasis at his feet. "I was delayed that much with the butter. It had to be seen to before the sun got too high."

"My mother always churned before breakfast," observed George, rising slowly to his feet.

His wife said nothing, but the color rose hotly in her cheeks, till the lost bloom of her girlhood seemed to have come back again, and she raised her eyes to his with a look that startled him.

Very handsome eyes they were dark, soft and velvety, with a world of love and tenderness in their depths.

Yet now they met his own coldly and sternly, with such an expression that he exclaimed:

"Good gracious! Letty. You look as if you hated me!"

"I'm afraid I do," was the astounding reply.

And with a swift glance at the clock, Letty hurried down into the cellar with a knife and a pan to make her preparations for dinner for six hungry haymakers.

"Afraid she hates me! My wife! She that was Letty Glover!" muttered he to himself in his bewilderment. "Why, what on earth—! She must be going crazy or something or other."

"Letty!" he called at the cellar door.

"It is ten minutes past ten," she answered from the depths of her cellar. "If I don't see about the dinner now it won't be on the table at 12 to the minute, as your mother used to have. I can't come."

"Well, if this don't beat all," said he to the maltese and white cat who ascended from the cellar and rubbed herself against his legs.

A shout from the hay field roused him to the recollection of the day's business.

He went out and dispensed with the treasures of his basket among the hungry men, who praised Letty's excellent cooking with every mouthful they swallowed.

"It is enough to make an old bachelor like me sit down and cry to see such raspberry shortcake as that," said Solomon Wyse, wiping the crumbs of the feast from his lips before he drank hard cider from the jug. "I tell you what it is George, you drew a prize when you went courting."

"So he did. And here's her good health," chimed in another mower, as he took up the jug.

George assented, vaguely.

They were talking of his wife—his wife, who was afraid she hated him.

Never had the two hours between lunch and dinner dragged so slowly.

As he rode round and round the field with a sharp rattle of the mowing machine he guided in his care, his mind was continually busy with Letty's looks, and her words, and his eyes turned often toward the cream colored farm house, behind whose spruce green blinds his wife was busy preparing dinner.

"I used to think how happy I should be if I persuaded her to come here," he thought. "It is two years—why, I declare it is two years this very day that we were married! I wonder if she remembers it!. But it isn't likely, when she says she is afraid she hates me."

Did she remember? Ah, in that remembrance lay the sting!

All the morning, while she got breakfast at 5 o'clock and washed the dishes, swept the rooms, made the beds, churned butter and prepared a lunch for six men, her heart turned back to that other morning 24 months ago, when the bright-eyed country maiden rose at 4 o'clock to complete her preparations for her wedding day.

How good, how kind, how handsome her George was then. How his eyes followed her; how his love blessed her.

Was it all her fault that the bloom and beauty of life had departed in those two short years?

Looking back she could see no day in which she had not at least tried to do her duty.

And looking in the glass she saw how the light and glow of youth had passed from her face, while accomplishing the task uncheered by the approval of him she loved.

"George has kept his color and his good looks because his work lies out of doors," she mused, "but I have worked in this old kitchen until I look old enough to be his mother. His mother'—she paused with a bitter laugh—"I almost wish I was his mother, then he would be suited with what I did."

Noon came. The twelve o'clock whistle sounded sharp and clear from the factory in the village a mile away; and before the whistle ceased a little figure stepped out on the side porch of the Brewster house and blew a horn.

"There's a woman for you," said Solomon Wyse, admiringly. "Dinner to the minute—and won't it be a good one?"

The dinner was indeed a success, every dainty of the season and the farm was there, skillfully cooked and neatly served on a table in the cool dining room—a table covered with snowy cloth fresh from its fold, and glass and china.

In the center of the table there stood a great china bowl of red roses that perfumed the room. Her cheeks were red, her eyes shone dark and bright, and her words and smiles were ready for every one save George.

As she sat grave and silent at the foot of the table, he looked at her wonderingly.

She wore a dress of silver grey alpaca that had been her traveling dress when they were married.

A large white apron, with a bib, shielded the glories of this costume. But why did she put it on? Surely she could not think of "going visiting" that afternoon, with six haymakers to get tea for and the milk of eight cows to attend to afterward. But he finally went out without asking it. The wife, who was afraid she hated him, seemed almost like a stranger, although she looked so much on this occasion like the girl he had married just two years ago.

As George neared the door of the wood shed, where the men were lounging away the rest of their nooning, he heard his own name, uttered by Solomon Wyse in tones of anger,

Involuntarily he stayed his steps.

"Yes, I knew George from a baby up and I always said he'd make a likely man. But I vow it is a shame to see how he treats that pretty little creature! Such a lunch this morning and such a dinner this noon, in such a nice cool room with the red roses and all the rest of it; and she just as pretty as a picture, with her red cheeks and bright eyes and her wavy hair, and dressed as neat as a pink, too. And he sitting there as glum as a cross old man of ninety. I was ashamed of him."

"I've heard he does nothing but find fault with her all day long," said a second voice. "My wife says if I threw my mother into her teeth, as George does in Letty's, she'd run away from me before she was a day older."

"And serve you right," chimes in a third. "I'll tell you what my wife says. She says it is confounded mean and small of George not to keep a woman here to help his wife. And when I saw her to-day the pretty little thing had got for us all alone, I thought so too. Hang me, if I hadn't half a mind to stop here this afternoon and help her wash up that great pile of dishes, and let the haying go to thunder. It's enough to kill the woman to have all that work to do. And George is rich. What on earth is he thinking about? But he'll be sorry for this in a year or two hence, when we have to come here on a different errand."

"To carry her out in a coffin?" said Solomon Wyse. "Yes, I suppose it will come to that if some of us don't talk seriously to George. She don't look at all strong now, and her hands trembled when she changed my plate. It's a burning shame—and if none of you will talk to George about it, I will."

But when George Brewster joined them Solomon Wyse deemed it prudent to pefer the proposed "talking to," for his brow was black as night, and he had no more to say to his neighbors now than to his wife at the dinner table.

This, then, was the way in which they spoke of him, behind his back, these men who labored beside him and took their wages from his friend and pretended to be his friends.

And his wife was afraid she hated him.

To whom could he turn for comfort—from whom could he expect true friendship, if she who should have been nearest and dearest was an enemy in disguise? Lost in moody reverie, he paid little attention to his work.

And at last, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, there was a sudden uproar in the hay field—a tramping of hoofs, a rush of terrified men, a confusion of voices, and among them all George Brester lying on the ground beneath the mowing machine, his right arm and leg broken by the wheels, his head cut and bleeding with his heavy fall.

Meanwhile Letty in the cream colored house had not been idle.

Tying on a great calico apron in place of her white one, she had quietly washed and put away the dinner dishes and reduced the dining room to order.

Tea was easily arranged, since it was to consist more of cold dishes, with glasses of milk for the men.

She threw a clean tablecloth over the whole as soon as it was finished, and went up stairs into the spare chamber to pack her trunk.

Yes, Letty had made up her mind at last. She was going away.

Life had degenerated into slavery, unbrightened as she fancied, by a ray of love.

"And slavery will support one anywhere," thought Letty, as with trembling hands she locked and strapped her trunk and fastened her few lines to George upon the lid.

She did not intend to glance toward the hay field.

Yet in spite of her resolution, her eyes turned that way, to single out a tall figure that guided the tall rattling mowing machine.

"I wonder if he will miss me a little—just at first?" she mused. "He can get a divorce, I suppose, if I desert him, and then he will marry again. I hope he will be kinder to his next wife than he has been to me!"

With tears that rose at thought of her successor blinding her eyes, Letty failed to see the figure that she sought.

"I am foolish to look at him again. I have never been more than a housekeeper from the first," she thought, stumbling blindly on toward the gate and opening it, to find herself in the center of an excited group.

"There, don't ye take on like that!" said Solomon Wyse, who came first and saw the tears upon her cheeks before she could wipe them away.

"Were you coming out to meet us? We were in hopes you didn't see any thing of it. It's a bad accident, but George is so strong and hearty that he will be up and around again almost before you know it. We've sent Ben Hill off on one of the colts for the doctor, and if you will only tell us where to carry him—"

"Carry him?" repeated Letty.

Solomon stepped aside. She saw behind him a litter roughly made of hay rakes and covered over with coats, and on that litter George was lying pale and bleeding with his eyes closed.

"Oh, Mr. Wyse, is he dead?" she asked, turning even paler than George.

"Not a bit of it! Worth twelve dozen dead men yet! Only a bit of a break in one arm and one leg, and a little knock on the head when he fell. The horse didn't kick, and he'll be all right as soon as the doctor sees him. Shall we take him up stairs, or where?"

"Bring him in here," said Letty, recovering herself.

She led the way to the bedroom on the ground floor and helped to shift the maimed figure from the litter to the bed.

Her soul was dying within her for fear, yet not a word passed her lips.

When the doctor came he found a capable nurse, dressed in dark print, who listened intelligently to his directions and promised to carry them out fully.

And so it happened that as George Brewster returned to life the first words that fell upon his ear were uttered by the doctor outside the window, as he mounted his gig:

"Yes, he will do, Mr. Wyse; he will pull through nice if his wife nurses him. And she can do so nicely if some of you will send one to take charge of the house. She is a woman in a thousand. I hope he knows how to value her."

Letty, bending over the bed absorbed in the invalid, had not heard him.

"What is it dear?"

"The doctor is right. You are a woman in a thousand! I always knew it, Letty, if I never said it. So I tell you of it now, before I die," he added, going off into another faint.

It was all that Letty's sore heart needed. Beside the bed of suffering she spent two of the happiest months of her life. The first act of George Brewster on his recovery was to secure help for his wife, so that she now has plenty of time to get back her lost color and plumpness. They are one in heart, as in name and home now. And Solomon Wyse has never seen occasion to administer the "talking to."

"Some how or rather," drawls Solomon, "getting run over by that moving machine was the making of George Brewster."

And Letty and George think so, too.

An Experience of Bishop Peck.

The death of Bishop Peck recalls an incident that made national mirth at his expense over thirty years ago—a clever trick of the undergraduate boys of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa., perpetrated soon after his accession to the presidency of that institution. Moncure D. Conway, then a Methodist preacher in prospect, has the traditional credit of being one of the devisers of the scheme. In the spring of 1849 the Baltimore Methodist conference held its annual session in Staunton, Va., the seat of one of the three state lunatic asylums. While President Peck was on his way to the conference the young rascals in the college of Carlisle wrote to the superintendent of the Staunton asylum that a lunatic had escaped from confinement in Pennsylvania, a very large man, very bald-headed, with great, round staring blue eyes, whose special form of madness was that he was a Methodist preacher and president of Dickinson College, answering to the name Dr. Peck. The friends of this gentlemen would be obliged to the Staunton superintendent if he would watch the cars and quietly take charge of him. The superintendent was on hand, singled out his man readily, and courteously addressed him, "Dr. Peck, I believe?" "Yes, sir." "President of Dickinson College?" "Yes, sir." "I have a carriage in waiting for you." "You are very kind," said the unsuspecting stranger, as he took his seat in the vehicle, and was forthwith whirled off to the lunatic limbo where he would have been incarcerated as a dangerous maniac, if the preachers of the conference had not interfered and assured the incredulous keeper of Old Dominion cranks that the Falstaffian doctor was as sane as the average of humanity, and only the victim of a ridiculous hoax.—Troy Times.

Speculating on One's Life.

From Demorest's Monthly for June.

The Chicagoan is nothing if not a speculator. He bets not only on grain and stocks, but on his very life. There are over twenty individuals in the chief city of Illinois whose lives are insured for $100,000 and over. John V. Farwell of that city has written to his credit $223,000 when he dies. Two hundred others in Chicago are insured for $55,000 and over, and over 1,000 for $20,000 and upward. Among the prominent men of eastern cities who carry large amounts of insurance we will name Cyrus W. Field, of New York, who has $250,000; F. B. Roberts, New York, $200,000; Charles Pratt, Brooklyn, $200,000; Alexander Barrett, New York, $200,000; F. W. De Voe, New York, $245,000; Pierre Lorrillard, New York, $255,000; James Park, Jr., Pittsburg, $300,000; W. H. Langly, Gallipolis, O. $300,000; Charles M. Runk, Allentown, Pa., $200,000; Geo. K. Anderson, Titusville, Pa. $315,000.

JEFF DAVIS IN RICHMOND.

His Reception in War Times—His Unpopularity—The Lees.

From Philadelphia Times.

The president's house was, of course, open on the evenings of regular receptions to any man who had a clean face and wore a decent coat. The crowd gathered there on such occasions was a motley assemblage. Wide latitude was allowed in the matter of dress, and the hideous, though patriotic, homespun figured side by side with the pretty toilet, whose possessor had run the blockade or come south under the flag of truce. Such dresses as these were last were rare and merely served to emphasize the new calicoes and carefully preserved silks and woolens in which most of the ladies present were arrayed. Mr. Davis invariably wore citizen's dress at these receptions, but the blaze of officers' uniforms made brilliant the spacious rooms of the old-fashioned mansion.

Probably the president of the confederate states was the most unpopular man within their limits. Grave, gentle, cordial and dignified, his manners in the presidential mansion were all that could be desired, but outside he was brusque to the verge of rudeness and carried his private prejudices into public life. The Examiner attacked him fiercely and criticised him mercilessly. John M. Daniel's brilliant intellect and keen satire made his paper a power in the country, and it was by far the most popular among Southern journals. Thus Mr. Davis' mistakes, and they were many, were fully informed of all quarrels in the confederate cabinet or with the generals of the army. Perhaps the chief cause of his unpopularity was his scarcely concealed enmity to General Lee, who was, on the other hand, the idol of the army, and through it of the people at home.

Probably nothing but Lee's stately courtesy and perfect self-control prevented an open rupture between himself and Davis. It was often charged that only the fear of an open revolt in the army kept Davis from endeavoring to remove Lee from the command of the confederate forces. Doubtless any such step would have provoked a revolt, but the vexed question of state rights stood also in the way. Lee was the chosen chief of the Virginia troops and as such could not have been removed by even the president of the confederacy. Indeed, Virginia claimed a peculiar position among the billigerent states. "The Mother of States and Statesmen" had, in tartily accepting the federal constitution of 1789, expressly reserved the right to withdraw from the union under certain contingencies, a right tacitly acknowledged at the time by the rest of the Old Thirteen." None of the other seceeded states having made the same stipulation, she was, therefore, in her own eyes, more than any other, a sovereign state asserting her sovereignity. Even Jeff Davis had too much prudence to provoke an open issue between Virginia and the confederacy and thus the old dominion held her ægis over her favorite son, who, in fact, was in the confederate army rather from loyalty to his state than as an advocate for secession.

Mrs. Davis was handsome and well accustomed to society by years of life in Washington. She discharged her duties as mistress of the presidential mansion wirh a quiet grace and dignity which, if it won her few friends, at all events made her no enemies. She was eminently domestic in her tastes, devoted to her husband and children, and after the terrible death of her little boy, who was killed during the second year of the war by a fall from the high porch in the rear of the house, she withdrew from society as much as possible, leaving her sister to fill her place. This the young lady was nothing loth to do, and indeed magnified her office to such an extent, as the Richmond ladies said, "gave herself such airs," that she came in for her full share of ill feeling toward her brother-in-law.

Mrs. Lee was an invalid, whose delicate health confined her almost entirely almost altogether to her own house. She held the office of president of the soldier's aid society by the wish of the whole country, but the active duties of the posts developed chiefly on the vice presidents. Her daughters were, of course, leaders in society and were loved and admired no less for their own attractions than their father's sake.

Fun at Salmon Fishing.

For the past few days fishermen have been enjoying fine sport at Oregon City fishing for salmon. It is only of late years that it has been known that salmon in the Columbia or its tributaries would take a bait or fly, many insisting that from the time they entered fresh water they ate nothing, and some averring that none of them ever returned to the sea, but having completed the object of their visit to the spawning beds they die. It will be remembered that a high official of the English government, who visited this section at an early day, when the ownership of the northwest was in dispute, was much disgusted with a "blarsted country where the salmon in the streams would not take a fly," and so did not use his best endeavors to secure this lovely region for his sovereign. It has, however, been demonstrated to a certainty that the salmon in the Williamette will take a spoon-fly, and on Saturday and Sunday fine sport was had at the falls at Oregon City. Fishermen are landed on a rocky point just below the falls by a boatman, who owns the rock and charges $1 for the ferriage and fishing privilege combined. On each of the days named about twenty-five salmon were taken. Several persons took eight, varying in weight from three or four pounds up to even twenty. A number of the fishermen had their rods broken. A Scotch gentleman, whose trusty lancewood rod had done good service in many a Highland stream and loch, had it shivered by a big silver-sides he had made fast to. An Indian caught thirty with a dip-net on Sunday, in the swirling water at the foot of the falls. A gentleman who had crossed over above the falls to fish left his dog behind. The faithful brute attempted to swim to him, but was carried over the falls, and rescued by a fisherman below. Hundreds of disgusting looking lamper eels were to be seen clinging to the wet surface of the rocks below the falls by their sucker-shaped mouths, the greater portion of their bodies out of the water. They are endeavoring to pass the falls, and from time to time they make short leaps by striking their tails on the water. The greater part of them are thrown down many times by the swift currents. Some fall into crevices and die. When one of these dead fish is dropped down the face of the rock upon those clinging to its surface, they immediately let go and drop in the water. A visit to the falls while the salmon are taking a fly will repay any one, whether he care to fish or not.—Portland Oregonian.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

Interesting History of Mrs. Hawthorne's Bust of the Greatly Afflicted Child.

From the Boston Commonwealth.

In 1839 there was published by Weeks, Jordan & Co., in this city, and Wiley & Putnam, New York and London, a paper-covered quarto pamphlet entitled "The Gentle Boy; a Thrice-Told Tale, by Nathanial Hawthorne, with an Oriental Illustration." The illustration was an outline-drawing, after Flaxman, and the passage in the story selected as its theme was: "The boy had hushed his wailing at once and turned his face up to the stranger." This sketch, falling under the eye of Clevinger, a young sculptor of brilliant promise, who had come to Boston from the west, was examined with much interest. His comment upon it was that the artist had, in his judgement, a decided natural gift for sculpture. Miss Sophia A Peabody of Salem (afterward the wife of Nathaniel Hawthorne,) was the artist, and in due course she became a pupil of Clevinger. And, although in this departmens of art but few specimens of her work remain, she accomplished enough to satisfy her friends that Clevinger was not mistaken. Among her earlier efforts were two medallian portraits which were remarkably successful, although one was made chiefly from memory, and the other from such suggestions as friends were able to furnish. Her first serious work in sculpture, for which sittings were regularly given, was a portrait bust of Laura Bridgman, at 13 years of age, which she undertook at the request of Dr. Howe. To the benevolent in all lands the history of Laura Bridgman has been a familiar story. A child of unusual promise, she had been smitten with scarlet fever while not three years of age. Escaping barely with her life, she survived with an impaired constitution and totally deprived of sight, of hearing, and of every sense, in fact, save that of touch and a faint vestige of taste and smell.

It is difficult to conceive of the utter sadness and isolation of this child upon whom had fallen a calamity so complete and dreadful. With bodily disabilities thus multiplied, it seemed as if her soul were immured within a marble tomb, and her one solitary sense, that of touch, has been likened to a lily hand stretched out from her living grave, appealing in her silence and darkness for sympathy and succor.

> "The fleshly walls are white and thin
> Which close her yearning spirit in;
> Celestial footfalls she can hear
> Inaudible to grosser ear."

And Dr. Howe (to the glory of God and his own everlasting honor) responded with celestial footfalls" to the cry of this imprisoned Psyche; and beautiful upon the mountain tops were the feet of her deliverer. He took her to the institution for the blind which will forever more be identified with his name and Laura's. He watched over and instructed her, until under his foster care, her faculties were so marvelously developed that he has been termed, not inappropriately her, second creator.

One of the most interesting chapters in Dickens' American Notes, is the story of his visit to the Perkin's institution and his account of Laura Bridgman. "Her face," he says "was radiant with intelligence and pleasure. Her hair, braided by her own hands, bound about a head whose intellectual capacity and preselopment were beautifully exbrossed in its graceful outline and its pectd open brow." Such were the aswas of the little girl when Miss Peabody aap commissioned by Dr. Howe to make the portrait bust above referred to. And it is an interesting circumstance that she was at that time betrothed to Nathaniel Hawthorne, and that the $150 which she received for the work went into a fund which she had already begun to set apart for her wedding trousseau.

Laura herself watched the progress of the clay model with keen interest, perusing its features with delicate; sensitive fingers, clapping her little hands with delight, and gleefuly speaking of the bust as her "white baby.' Miss Peabody's plan was to screen the eyes with a kerchief as in the classic statues of the goddess of Justice, but Dr. Howe unfortunately, as we think, objected to that method, preferring a literal treatment; and, in conformity with his wishes, she reluctantly copied the ribbon which was actually worn by the child at the time. The completed bust was a perfect success—satisfactory to Dr. Howe and to all who had watched with interest the progress of the work. Only one copy was made, however, and that may still, be seen at the Perkins institution for the blind, at South Boston. For a long time it has stood there in the rotunda, but unfortunately, it was placed at too high a point for the light to fall upon it at a favorable angle, and so it would seem to have lapsed practically into unmerited oblivion.

During the present year, however, an active interest seems to have sprung up in this nearly forgotten work of Mrs. Hawthorne. Copies have been multiplied; and nearly every school for blind and for deaf mutes in this country which could afford the trifling cost has gladly procured one. And inquiries for copies are now coming from England, France, Scotland, and elsewhere abroad.

Coal is stated to have been discovered over 600,000 acres at Cabbage Bay, Auckland, N. Z.

The Swiss army on January 1, 1883, numbered 205,176 men. Only 3,090 are in active service.