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by Marietta Holley**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SAMANTHA AMONG THE BRETHREN —
VOLUME 6 ***

SAMANTHA
AMONG THE BRETHREN.

BY
"JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE"
(MARIETTA HOLLEY).

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



SAMANTHA
AMONG THE BRETHREN.

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"JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE"

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1890

Part 6.

TO

All Women

WHO WORK, TRYING TO BRING INTO DARK LIVES
THE BRIGHTNESS AND HOPE OF A
BETTER COUNTRY,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

Again it come to pass, in the fulness of time, that my companion, Josiah Allen, see me walk up and take my ink stand off of the manteltry piece, and carry it with a calm and majestick gait to the corner of the settin' room table devoted by me to literary pursuits. And he sez to me:

"What are you goin' to tackle now, Samantha?"

And sez I, with quite a good deal of dignity, "The Cause of Eternal Justice, Josiah Allen."

"Anythin' else?" sez he, lookin' sort o' oneasy at me. (That man realizes his shortcomin's, I believe, a good deal of the time, he duz.)

"Yes," sez I, "I lay out in petickuler to tackle the Meetin' House. She is in the wrong on't, and I want to set her right."

Josiah looked sort o' relieved like, but he sez out, in a kind of a pert way, es he set there a-shellin corn for the hens:

"A Meetin' House hadn't ort to be called she—it is a he."

And sez I, "How do you know?"

And he sez, "Because it stands to reason it is. And I'd like to know what you have got to say about him any way?"

Sez I, "That 'him' don't sound right, Josiah Allen. It sounds more right and nateral to call it 'she.' Why," sez I, "hain't we always hearn about the Mother Church, and don't the Bible tell about the Church bein' arrayed like a bride for her husband? I never in my life hearn it called a 'he' before."

"Oh, wall, there has always got to be a first time. And I say it sounds better. But what have you got to say about the Meetin' House, anyway?"

"I have got this to say, Josiah Allen. The Meetin' House hain't a-actin' right about wimmen. The Founder of the Church wuz born of woman. It wuz on a woman's heart that His head wuz pillowed first and last. While others slept she watched over His baby slumbers and His last sleep. A woman wuz His last thought and care. Before dawn she wuz at the door of the tomb, lookin' for

His comin'. So she has stood ever sense—waitin', watchin', hopin', workin' for the comin' of Christ. Workin', waitin' for His comin' into the hearts of tempted wimmen and tempted men—fallen men and fallen wimmen—workin', waitin', toilin', nursin' the baby good in the hearts of a sinful world—weepin' pale-faced over its crucefixion—lookin' for its reserection. Oh how she has worked all through the ages!"

"Oh shaw!" sez Josiah, "some wimmen don't care about anythin' but crazy work and back combs."

I felt took down, for I had been riz up, quite considerble, but I sez, reasonable:

"Yes, there are such wimmen, Josiah, but think of the sweet and saintly souls that have given all their lives, and hopes, and thoughts to the Meetin' House—think of the throngs to-day that crowd the aisles of the Sanctuary—there are five wimmen to one man, I believe, in all the meetin' houses to-day a-workin' in His name. True Daughters of the King, no matter what their creed may be—Catholic or Protestant.

"And while wimmen have done all this work for the Meetin' House, the Meetin' House ort to be honorable and do well by her."

"Wall, hain't *he*?" sez Josiah.

"No, *she* hain't," sez I.

"Wall, what petickuler fault do you find? What has *he* done lately to rile you up?"

Sez I, "*She* wuz in the wrong on't in not lettin' wimmen set on the Conference."

"Wall, I say *he* wuz right," sez Josiah. "*He* knew, and I knew, that wimmen wuzn't strong enough to set."

"Why," sez I, "it don't take so much strength to set as it duz to stand up. And after workin' as hard as wimmen have for the Meetin' House, she ort to have the priveledge of settin'. And I am goin' to write out jest what I think about it."

"Wall," sez Josiah, as he started for the barn with the hen feed, "don't be too severe with the Meetin' House."

And then, after he went out, he opened the door agin and stuck his head in and sez:

"Don't be too hard on *him*"

And then he shet the door quick, before I could say a word. But good land! I didn't care. I knew I could say what I wanted to with my faithful pen—and I am bound to say it.

JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE, Bonny View,
near Adams, New York,
Oct. 14th, 1890.

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MISS TIMSON'S letter wuz writ to me on the 6th day of his sickness, and Josiah and me set sail for Loontown on the follerin' day after we got it.

I laid the case before the female Sisters of the meetin' house, and they all counselled me to go. For, as they all said, on account of Sister Bobbet's fallin' on the apple parin' we could not go on with the work of paperin' the meetin' house, and so the interests of Zion wouldn't languish on account of my absence for a day or two any way. And, as the female Sisters all said, it seemed as if the work I wuz called to in Loontown wuz a fair and square case of Duty, so they all counselled me to go, every one on 'em. Though, as wuz nateral, there wuz severel divisions of opinions as to the road I should take

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But, as I sez, as to my goin' they wuz every one on 'em unanimus. They meen well, those sisters in the meetin' house do, every one on 'em.

Josiah acted real offish at first about goin'. And he laid the case before the male brothers of the meetin' house, for Josiah wuz fearful that the interests of the buzz saw mill would languish in his absence. One or two of the weaker brethren joined in with him, and talked kinder deprestin' about it.

But Deacon Sypher and Deacon Henzy said they would guard his interests with eagle visions, or somethin' to that effect, and they counselled Josiah warmly that it wuz his duty to go.

We hearn afterwards that Deacon Sypher and Deacon Henzy wanted to go into the North Woods a-fishin' and a-huntin' for 2 or 3 days, and it has always been spozed by me that that accounted for their religeus advice to Josiah Allen.

Howsumever, I don't *know* that. But I do know that they started off a-fishin' the very day we left for Loontown, and that they come back home about the time we did, with two long strings of trout.



THE RETURN OF THE HUNTERS.

And there wuz them that said that they ketched the trout, and them that said they bought 'em.

And they brung back the antlers of a deer in their game bags, and some bones of a elk. And there are them that sez that they dassent, either one of 'em, shoot off a gun, not hardly a pop gun. But I don't know the truth of this. I know what they *said*, they *said* the huntin' wuz excitin' to the last degree, and the fishin' superb.

And there wuz them that said that they should think the huntin' would be excitin', a-rummagin' round on the ground for some old bones, and they should think the fishin' would be superb, a-dippin' 'em out of a barell and stringin' 'em onto their own strings.

But their stories are very large, that I know. And each one on 'em, accordin' to their tell, ketched more trouts than the other one, and fur bigger ones, and shot more deers.

Wall, Deacon Sypher'ses advice and Deacon Henzy's influenced Josiah a good deal, and I said quite a few words to him on the subject, and, suffice it to say, that the next day, about 10 A.M., we set out on our journey to Loontown.



“MISS TIMSON AND ROSY SEEMED DRETFUL GLAD TO SEE ME.”

Miss Timson and Rosy seemed dretful glad to see me, but they wuz pale and wan, wanner fur than I expected to see 'em; but after I had been there a spell I see how it wuz. I see that Ralph wuz their hero as well as their love, and they worshipped him in every way, with their hearts and their souls and their idealized fancies.

Wall, he wuz a noble lookin' man as I ever see, fur or near, and as good a one as they make, he wuz strong and tender, so I couldn't blame 'em.

And though I wouldn't want Josiah to hear me say too much about it, or mebbly it would be best that he shouldn't, before I had been there 24 hours I begun to feel some as they did.

But my feelin's wuz strictly in a meetin' house sense, strictly.

But I begun to feel with them that the middle of the world wuz there in that bedroom, and the still, white figure a-layin' there wuz the centre, and the rest of the world wuz a-revolvin' round him.

His face wuz worn and marked by the hand of Time and Endeaver. But every mark wuz a good one. The Soul, which is the best sculptor after all, had chiselled into his features the marks of a deathless endeavor and struggle toward goodness, which is God. Had marked it with the divine sweetness and passion of livin' and toilin' for the good of others.

He had gi'n his life jest as truly to seek and save them that wuz lost as ever any old prophet and martyr ever had sense the world began. But under all these heavenly expressions that a keen eye could trace in his good lookin' face, could be seen a deathly weakness, the consumin' fire that wuz a-consumin' of him.

Miss Timson wept when she see me, and Rosy threw herself into my arms and sobbed. But I gently ondid her arms from round my neck and give Miss Timson to understand that I wuz there to *help* 'em if I could.

"For," sez I softly, "the hull future time is left for us to weep in, but the present wuz the time to try to help Ralph S. Robinson."

Wall, I laid to, Josiah a-helpin' me nobly, a-pickin' burdock leaves or beet leaves, as the case might be, and a-standin' by me nobly all through the follerin' night (that is, when he wuz awake).

Josiah and I took care on him all that night, Miss Timson refusin' to give him into the charge of underlin's, and we a-offerin' and not to be refused.

Wall, Josiah slept some, or that is, I s'poze he did. I didn't hear much from him from 10 P.M. to

5 A.M., only once I heard him murmur in his sleep, "buzz saw mill."

But every time I would come out into the settin' room where he sot and roust him up to get sunthin' for me, he would say, almost warmly—

"Samantha, that last remark of your'n wuz very powerful." And I wouldn't waste my time nor hisen by tellin' him that I hadn't made no remark, nor thought on't. I see it would hurt his feelin's, specilly as he would add in haste—

"That he didn't see how folks needed so much sleep; as for him, it wuz a real treat to keep awake all night, now and then."



" DIDN'T SEE HOW FOLKS NEEDED SO MUCH SLEEP."

No, I would let it go, and ask him for burdock or beet, as the case might be. Truly I had enough on my mind and heart that night without disputin' with my Josiah.

Ralph S. Robinson would lay lookin' like a dead man some of the time, still and demute, and then he would speak out in a strange language, stranger than any I ever heard. He would preach sermons in that language, I a-knowin' it wuz a sermen by his gestures, and also by my feelin's. And then he would shet up his eyes and pray in that strange, strange tongue, and anon breakin' out into our own language. And once he said:

"And now may the peace of God be with you all. Amen. The peace of God! the peace! the peace!"

His voice lingered sort o' lovin'ly over that word, and I felt that he wuz a-thinkin' then of the real peace, the onbroken stillness, outside and inside, that he invoked.

Rosy would steal in now and then like a sweet little shadow, and bend down and kiss her Pa, and cry a little over his thin, white hands which wuz a-lyin' on the coverlet, or else lifted in that strange speech that sounded so curius to us, a-risin' up out of the stillness of a Loontown spare bedroom on a calm moonlit evenin'.

Wall, Friday and Saturday he wuz crazier'n a loon, more'n half the time he wuz, but along Saturday afternoon the Doctor told us that the fever would turn sometime the latter part of the night, and if he could sleep then, and not be disturbed, there would be a chance for his life.

Wall, Miss Timson and Rosy both told me how the ringin' of the bells seemed to roust him up and skair him (as it were) and git him all excited and crazy. And they both wuz dretful anxius about the mornin' bells which would ring when Ralph would mebbly be sleepin'. So thinkin' it wuz a case of life and death, and findin' out who wuz the one to tackle in the matter, I calmly tied on my bonnet and walked over and tackled him.

CHAPTER XXIV.



IT wuz Deacon Garven and he wuz a close communion Baptist by perswaision, and a good man, so fur as firm morals and a sound creed goes. Some things he lacked : he hadn't no immagination at all, not one speck. And in makin' him up, it seems as if he had a leetle more justice added to him to make up a lack of charity and pity. And he had a good deal of sternness and resolve gin him, to make up, I spoze, for a lack of tenderness and sweetness of nater.

A good sound man Deacon Garven wuz, a man who would cheat himself before he would cheat a neighbor. He wuz jest full of qualities that would hender him from ever takin' a front part in a scandal and a tragedy. Yes, if more men wuz like Deacon Garven the pages of the daily papers

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Wall, he wuz in his office when I tackled him. The hired girl asked me if I come for visitin' purposes or business, and I told her firmly, "business!"

So she walked me into a little office one side of the hall, where I spoze the Deacon transacted the business that come up on his farm, and then he wuz Justice of the Peace, and trustee of varius concerns (every one of 'em good ones).

He is a tall, bony man, with eyes a sort of a steel gray, and thin lips ruther wide, and settin' close together. And without lookin' like one, or, that is, without havin' the same features at all, the Deacon did make me think of a steel trap. I spoze it wuz because he wuz so sound, and sort o' firm. A steel trap is real firm when it lays hold and tries to be.



“THE DEACON DID MAKE ME THINK OF A STEEL TRAP.”

Wall, I begun the subject carefully, but straight to the pint, as my way is, by tellin' him that Ralph S. Robinson wuz a-layin' at death's door, and his life depended on his gettin' sleep, and we wuz afraid the bells in the mornin' would roust him up, and I had come to see if he would omit the ringin' of 'em in the mornin'.

"Not ring the bells!" sez he, in wild amaze. "Not ring the church bells on the Sabbath day?"

His look wuz skairful in the extreme, but I sez—

"Yes, that is what I said, we beg of you as a Christian to not ring the bells in the mornin'."

"A Christian! A Christian! Advise me as a *Christian* to not ring the Sabbath bells!"

I see the idee skairt him. He wuz fairly pale with surprise and borrow. And I told him agin', puttin' in all the perticilers it needed to make the story straight and good, how Ralph S. Robinson had labored for the good of others, and how his strength had gin out, and he wuz now a-layin' at the very pint of death, and how his girl and his sister wuz a-breakin' their hearts over him, and how we had some hopes of savin' his life if he could get some sleep, that the doctors said his life depended on it, and agin I begged him to do what we asked.

But the Deacon had begin to get over bein' skairt, and he looked firm as anybody ever could, as he sez: "The bells never hurt anybody, I know, for here I have lived right by the side of 'em for 20 years. Do I look broke down and weak?" sez he.

"No," sez I, honestly. "No more than a grannit monument, or a steel trap."

"Wall," sez he, "what don't hurt me won't hurt nobody else."

"But," sez I, "folks are made up different." Sez I, "The Bible sez so, and what might not hurt you, might be the ruin of somebody else. Wuz you ever nervous?" sez I.

"Never," sez he. And he added firmly, "I don't believe in nerves. I never did. There hain't no use in 'm."

"It wuz a wonder they wuz made, then," sez I. "As a generel thing the Lord don't make things there hain't no use on. Howsumever," sez I, "there hain't no use in disputin' back and forth on a nerve. But any way, sickness is so fur apart from health, that the conditions of one state can't be

compared to the other; as Ralph S. Robinson is now, the sound of the bells, or any other loud noise means torture and agony to him, and, I am afraid, death. And I wish you would give orders to not have 'em rung in the mornin'."

"Are you a professor?" sez he.

"Yes," sez I.

"What perswaision?" sez he.

"Methodist Episcopal," sez I.

"And do you, a member of a sister church, which, although it has many errors, is still a-gropin' after the light! Do you counsel me to set aside the sacred and time honored rules of our church, and allow the Sabbath to go by unregarded, have the sanctuary desecrated, the cause of religion languish—I cannot believe it. Think of the widespread desolation it would cause if, as the late lamented Mr. Selkirk sung:

"The sound of the church-going bells,
These valleys and hills never heard."

"No church, no sanctuary, no religius observances."

"Why," sez I, "that wouldn't hinder folks from goin' to church. Folks seem to get to theatres, lectures, and disolvin' views on time, and better time than they do to meetin'," sez I. "In your opinin' it hain't necessary to beat a drum and sound on a bugle as the Salvation Army duz, to call folks to meetin'; you are dretful hard on them, so I hear."

"Yes, they make a senseless, vulgar, onnecessary racket, disturbin' and agrivatin' to saint and sinner."

"But," sez I, "they say they do it for the sake of religion."

"Religion hain't to be found in drum-sticks," sez he bitterly.

"No," sez I, "nor in a bell clapper."

"Oh," sez he, "that is a different thing entirely, that is to call worshippers together, that is necessary."

Sez I, "One hain't no more necessary than the other in my opinion."

Sez he, "Look how fur back in the past the sweet bells have sounded out."

"Yes," sez I candidly, "and in the sweet past they wuz necessary," sez I. "In the sweet past, there wuzn't a clock nor a watch, the houses wuz fur apart, and they needed bells. But now there hain't a house but what is runnin' over with clocks—everybody knows the time; they know it so much that time is fairly a drug to 'em. Why, they time themselves right along through the day, from breakfast to midnight. Time their meals, their business, their pleasures, their music, their lessons, their visits, their visitors, their pulse beats, and their dead beats. They time their joys and their sorrows, and everything and everybody, all through the week, and why should they stop short off Sundays? Why not time themselves on goin' to meetin'? They do, and you know it. There hain't no earthly need of the bells to tell the time to go to meetin', no more than there is to tell the time to put on the tea-kettle to get supper. If folks want to go to meetin' they will get there, bells or no bells, and if they don't want to go, bells hain't a-goin' to get 'em started.

"Take a man with the Sunday *World* jest brung in, a-layin' on a lounge, with his feet up in a chair, and kinder lazy in the first place, bells hain't a-goin' to start him.

"And take a woman with her curl papers not took down, and a new religeus novel in her hand, and a miliner that disapinted her the night before, and bells hain't a-goin' to start her. No, the great bell of Moscow won't start 'em.



“BELLS HAIN'T A-GOIN' TO START HIM.”

"And take a good Christian woman, a widow, for instance, who loves church work, and has a good handsome Christian pasture, who is in trouble, lost his wife, mebby, or sunthin' else bad, and the lack of bells hain't a-goin' to keep that women back, no, not if there wuzn't a bell on earth."

"Oh, wall, wavin' off that side of the subject," sez he (I had convinced him, I know, but he wouldn't own it, for he knew well that if folks wanted to go they always got there, bells or no bells). "But," sez he wavin' off that side of the subject, "the observance is so time honored, so hallowed by tender memories and associations all through the past."

"Don't you 'spoze, Deacon Garven," sez I, "that I know every single emotion them bells can bring to anybody, and felt all those memorys and associations. I'll bet, or I wouldn't be afraid to bet, if I believed in bettin', that there hain't a single emotion in the hull line of emotions that the sound of them bells can wake up, but what I have felt, and felt 'em deep too, jest as deep as anybody ever did, and jest es many of 'em. But it is better for me to do without a upliftin', soarin' sort of a feelin' ruther than have other people suffer agony."

"Agony!" sez he, "talk about their causin' agony, when there hain't a more heavenly sound on earth."



'A-LEANIN' OVER THE FRONT GATE ON A STILL SPRING MORNIN'.'

"So it has been to me," sez I candidly. "To me they have always sounded beautiful, heavenly. Why," sez I, a-lookin' kinder fur off, beyond Deacon Garven, and all other troubles, as thoughts of beauty and insperation come to me borne out of the past into my very soul, by the tender memories of the bells—thoughts of the great host of believers who had gathered together at the sound of the bells—the great army of the Redeemed—

'Some of the host have crossed the flood,
and some are crossin' now,'

thinks I a-lookin' way off in a almost rapped way. And then I sez to Deacon Garven in a low soft voice, lower and more softer fur, than I had used to him,

"Don't I know what it is to stand a-leanin' over the front gate on a still spring mornin', the smell of the lilacs in the air, and the brier roses. A dew sparklin' on the grass under the maples, and the sunshine a-fleckin' the ground between 'em, and the robins a-singin' and the hummin' birds a-hoverin' round the honeysuckles at the door. And over all and through all, and above all clear and sweet, comin' from fur off a-floatin' through the Sabbath stillness, the sound of the bells, a-bringin' to us sweet Sabbath messages of love and joy. Bringin' memories too, of other mornin's as fair and sweet, when other ears listened with us to the sound, other eyes looked out on the summer beauty, and smiled at the sound of the bells. Heavenly emotions, sweet emotions come to me on the melody of the bells, peaceful thoughts, inspirin' thoughts of the countless multitude that has flocked together at the sound of the bells. The aged feet, the eager youthful feet, the children's feet, all, all walkin' to the sound of the bells. Thoughts of the happy youthful feet that set out to walk side by side, at their ringin' sounds. Thoughts of the aged ones grown tired, and goin' to their long dreamless sleep to their solemn sound. Thoughts of the brave hero's who set out to protect us with their lives while the bells wuz ringin' out their approval of such deeds. Thoughts of how they pealed out joyfully on their return bearin' the form of Peace. Thoughts of how the bells filled the mornin' and evenin' air, havin' throbbled and beat with every joy and every pain of our life, till they seem a part of us (as it were) and the old world would truly seem lonesome without 'em.

"As I told you, and told you truly, I don't believe there is a single emotion in the hull line of emotions, fur or near, but what them bells have rung into my very soul.

"But such emotions, beautiful and inspirin' though they are, can be dispensed with better than justice and mercy can. Sweet and tender sentiment is dear to me, truly, near and dear, but mercy

and pity and common sense, have also a powerful grip onto my right arm, and have to lead me round a good deal of the time.

"Beautiful emotion, when it stands opposed to eternal justice, ort to step gently aside and let justice have a free road. Sentiment is truly sweet, but any one can get along without it, take it right along through the year, better than they can without sleep.

"You see if you can't sleep you must die, while a person can worry along a good many years without sentiment. Or, that is, I have been told they could. I don't know by experience, for I have always had a real lot of it. You see my experience has been such that I could keep sentiment and comfort too. But my mind is such, that I have to think of them that hain't so fortunate as I am.

"I have looked at the subject from my own standpoint, and have tried also to look at it through others' eyes, which is the only way we can get a clear, straight light on any subject. As for me, as I have said, I would love to hear the sweet, far off sound of the bells a-tremblin' gently over the hills to me from Jonesville; it sounds sweeter to me than the voices of the robins and swallows, a-comin' home from the South in the spring of the year. And I would deerly love to have it go on and on as fur as my own feelins are concerned. But I have got to look at the subject through the tired eyes, and feel it through the worn-out nerves of others, who are sot down right under the wild clamor of the bells.

"What comes to me as a heavenly melody freighted full of beautiful sentiment and holy rapture comes to them as an intolerable agony, a-maddenin' discord, that threatens their sanity, that rouses 'em up from their fitful sleep, that murders sleep—the bells to them seem murderus, strikin' noisily with brazen hands, at their hearts.



“TOSSIN’ ON BEDS OF NERVOUS SUFFERIN’.”

"To them tossin' on beds of nervous sufferin', who lay for hours fillin' the stillness with horror, with dread of the bells, where fear and dread of 'em exceed the agony of the clangor of the sound when it comes at last. Long nights full of a wakeful horror and expectancy, fur worse than the realization of their imaginin's. To them the bells are a instrument of torture jest as tuff to bear as any of the other old thumb screws and racks that wrung and racked our old 4 fathers in the name of Religion.

"I have to think of the great crowd of humanity huddled together right under the loud clangor of the bells whose time of rest begins when the sun comes up, who have toiled all night for our comfort and luxury. So we can have our mornin' papers brought to us with our coffee. So we can

have the telegraphic messages, bringing us good news with our toast. So's we can have some of our dear ones come to us from distant lands in the morning. I must think of them who protect us through the night so we can sleep in peace.

"Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of these, our helpers and benefactors, work all night for our sakes, work and toil. The least we can do for these is to help 'em to the great Restorer, sleep, all we can.

"Some things we can't do; we can't stop the creakin' sounds of the world's work; the big roar of the wheel of business that rolls through the week days, can't be oiled into stillness; but Sundays they might get a little rest Sunday is the only day of rest for thousands of men and wimmen, nervous, pale, worn by their week's hard toil.

"The creakin' of the wheels of traffic are stopped on this day. They could get a little of the rest they need to carry on the fight of life to help support wife, child, father, husband; but religeon is too much for 'em—the religeon that the Bible declares is mild, peacible, tender. It clangs and bangs and whangs at 'em till the day of rest is a torment.

"Now the Lord wouldn't approve of this. I know He wouldn't, for He was always tender and pitiful full of compassion. I called it religeon for oritory, but it hain't religeon, it is a relict of old Barberism who, under the cloak of Religeon, whipped quakers and hung prophetic souls, that the secrets of Heaven had been revealed to, secrets hidden from the coarser, more sensual vision."

Sez Deacon Garven: "I consider the bells as missionarys. They help spread the Gospel."

"And," sez I, for I waz full of my subject, and kep him down to it all I could, "Ralph S. Robinson has spread the Gospel over acres and acres of land, and brung in droves and droves of sinners into the fold without the help of church or steeple, let alone bells, and it seems es if he ortn't to be tortured to death now by 'em."

"Wall," he said, "he viewed 'em as Gospel means, and he couldn't, with his present views of his duty to the Lord, omit 'em."

Sez I, "The Lord didn't use 'em. He got along without 'em."

"Wall," he said, "it wuz different times now."

Sez I, "The Lord, if He wuz here to-day, Deacon Garven, if He had bent over that form racked with pain and sufferin' and that noise of any kind is murderous to, He would help him, I know He would, for He wuz good to the sick, and tender hearted always."

"Wall, I will help him," sez Deacon Garven, "I will watch, and I will pray, and I will work for him."

Sez I, "Will you promise me not to ring the bells to-morrow mornin'; if he gets into any sleep at all durin' the 24 hours, it is along in the mornin', and I think if we could keep him asleep, say all the forenoon, there would be a chance for him. Will you promise me?"

"Wall," sez he kinder meltin' down a little, "I will talk with the bretheren."

Sez I, "Promise me, Deacon Eben Garven, before you see 'em."

Sez he, "I would, but I am so afraid of bringin' the Cause of Religeon into contempt. And I dread meddlin' with the old established rules of the church."

Sez I, "Mercy and justice and pity wuz set up on earth before bells wuz, and I believe it is safe to foller 'em."

But he wouldn't promise me no further than to talk with the bretheren, and I had to leave him with that promise. As things turned out afterwuds, I wuz sorry, sorry es a dog that I didn't shet up Deacon Garven in his own smoke house, or cause him to be shet, and mount a guard over him, armed nearly to the teeth with clubs.

But I didn't, and I relied some on the bretheren.

Ralph wuz dretful wild all the forepart of the night. He'd lay still for a few minutes, and then he would get all roused up, and he would set up in bed and call out some words in that strange tongue. And he would lift up his poor weak right arm, strong then in his fever, and preach long sermons in that same strange curius language. He would preach his sermon right through, earnest and fervent as any sermon ever wuz. I would know it by the looks of his face. And then he would sometimes sing a little in that same singular language, and then he would lay down for a spell.

But along towards mornin' I see a change, his fever seemed to abate and go down some—very gradual, till just about the break of day, he fell into a troubled sleep—or it wuz a troubled sleep at first—but growin' deeper and more peaceful every minute. And along about eight o'clock he wuz a-sleepin' sweet for the first time durin' his sickness; it wuz a quiet restful sleep, and some drops of presperation and sweat could be seen on his softened features.

We all wuz as still, almost, as if we wuz automatoes, we wuz so afraid of makin' a speck of noise to disturb him. We kep almost breathless, in our anxiety to keep every mite of noise out of his room. But I did whisper to Rosy in a low still voice—



“THE LORD BE PRAISED, WE SHALL PULL HIM THROUGH.”

"Your father is saved, the Lord be praised, we shall pull him through."

She jest dropped onto her knees, and laid her head in my lap and cried and wept, but soft and quiet so's it wouldn't disturb a mice.

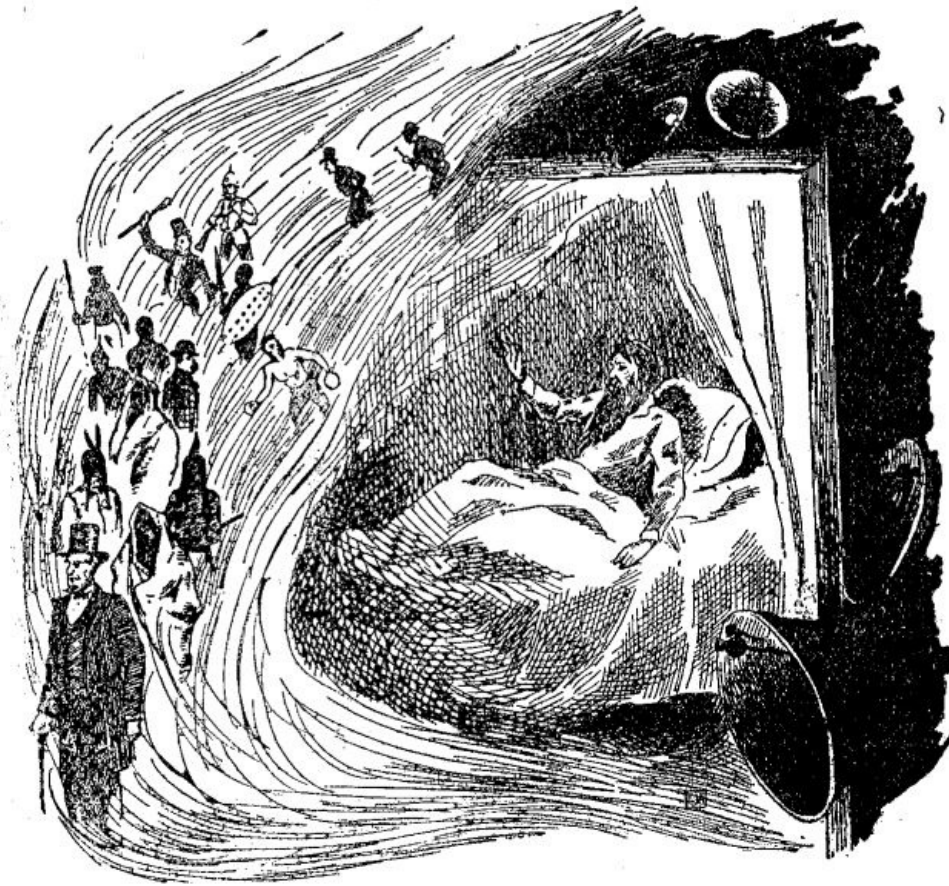
Miss Timson wuz a-prayin', I could see that. She wuz a-returnin' thanks to the Lord for his mercy.

As for me, I sot demute, in that hushed and darkened room, a-watchin' every shadow of a change that might come to his features, with a teaspoon ready to my hand, to give him nourishment at the right time if he needed it, or medicine.

When all of a sudden—slam! bang! rush! roar! slam! slam! ding! dong! bang!!! come right over our heads the wild, deafening clamor of the bells.

Ralph started up wilder than ever because of his momentary repose. He never knew us, nor anything, from that time on, and after sufferin' for another 24 hours, sufferin' that made us all willin' to have it stop, he died.

And so he who had devoted his hull life to religeon wuz killed by it. He who had gin his hull life for the true, wuz murdered by the false.



“ AND I THOUGHT HE WUZ PRONOUNCIN’ A BENEDICTION ON THE SAVAGES.”

His last move wuz to spread out his hands, and utter a few of them strange words, as if in benediction over a kneelin' multitude. And I thought then, and I think still, that he wuz pronouncin' a benediction on the savages. And I have always hoped that the mercy he besought from on High at that last hour brought down God's pity and forgiveness on all benighted savages, and bigoted ones, Deacon Garven, and the hull on 'em.

CHAPTER XXV.



THE very next day after I got home from Miss Timson'ses, we wimmen all met to the meetin' house agin as usial, for we knew very well that the very hardest and most arjuous part of our work lay before us.

For if it had been hard and tuckerin' to what it seemed the utmost limit of tucker, to stand up on a lofty barell, and lift up one arm, and scrape the ceilin', what would it be, so we wildly questioned our souls, and each other, to stand up on the same fearful hites, and lift *both* arms over our heads, and get on them fearful lengths of paper smooth.

I declare, when the hull magnitude of the task we had tackled riz before us, it skairt the hull on us, and nuthin' but our deathless devotion to the Methodist meetin' house, kep us from startin' off to our different homes on the run.

But lovin' it as we did, as the very apples in our

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But lovin' it as we did, as the very apples in our eyes, and havin' in our constant breasts a determinate to paper that meetin' house, or die in the attempt, we made ready to tackle it.



“WE HAD TO WAIT FOR THE PASTE TO BILE.”

Yet such wuz the magnitude of the task, and our fearful apprehensions, that after we had looked the ceilin' all over, and examined the paper—we all sot down, as it were, instinctivly, and had a sort of a conference meetin' (we had to wait for the paste to bile anyway, it wuz bein' made over the stove in the front entry). And he would lift up his poor weak right arm, strong then in his fever, and preach long sermons in that same strange curius language. He would preach his sermon right through, earnest and fervent as any sermon ever wuz. I would know it by the looks of his face. And then he would sometimes sing a little in that same singular language, and then he would lay down for a spell.

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“WE ALL SET AND LAID ON OUR PLANS, AND CUT THE EDGES OFFEN THE PAPER.”

We all wuz as still, almost, as if we wuz automatoes, we wuz so afraid of makin' a speck of noise to disturb him. We kep almost breathless, in our anxiety to keep every mite of noise out of his room. But I did whisper to Rosy in a low still voice—it middlin calm, and Miss Gowdy offered to be the one to carry it back to Jonesville, and change it that very afternoon—for we could not afford to buy a new one, and we had the testimony of as many as twenty-one or two pairs of eyes, that the handle didn't come out by our own carelessness, but by its own inherient weakness—so we spozed he would swap it, we spozed so. But it wuz arraigned before we disbanded (the result of our conference), that the next mornin' we would each one on us bring our offerin's to the fair, and hand 'em in to the treasurer, so's she would know in time what to depend on, and what she had to do with.

And we agreed (also the result of our conference) that we would, each one on us, tell jest how we got the money and things to give to the fair.

And then we disbanded and started off home but I'll bet that each one on us, in a sort of secret unbeknown way, gin a look on that lofty ceilin', them dangerus barells, and that pile of paper, and groaned a low melancholy groan all to herself.



“THE HANDLE COME OUT.”

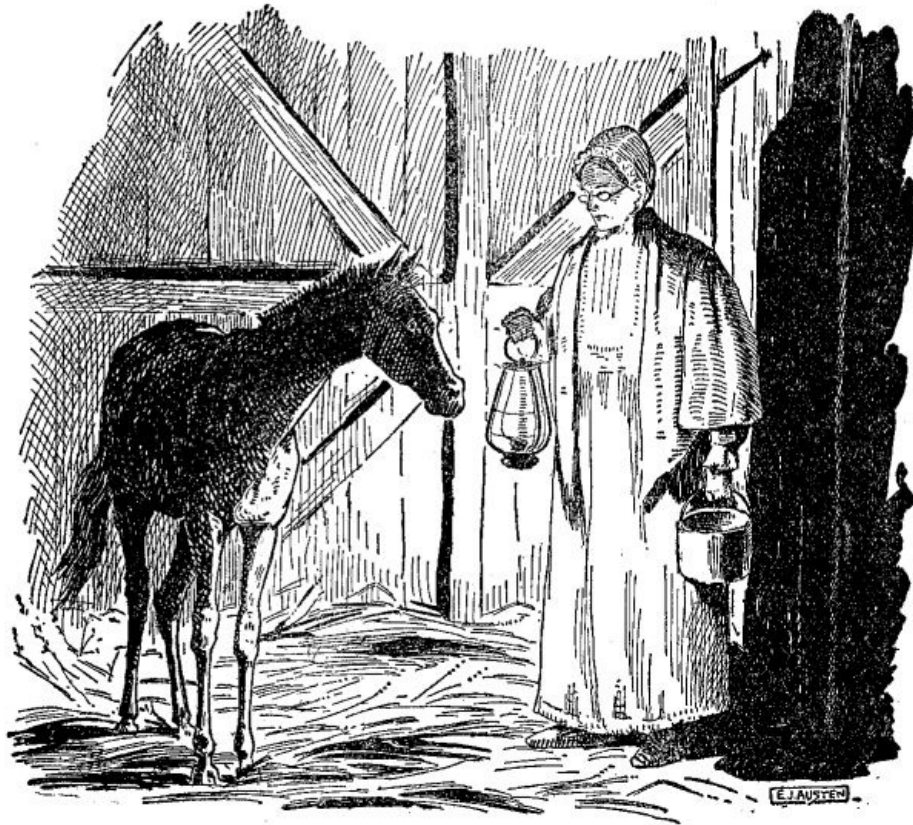
I know I did, and I know Submit Tewksbury did, for I stood close to her and heard her. But then to be exactly jest, and not a mite underhanded, I ort mebbly to say, that her groan may be caused partly by the fact that that aniversery of hern wuz a-drawin' so near. Yes, the very next day wuz the day jest 20 years ago that Samuel Danker went away from Submit Tewksbury to heathen lands. Yes, the next day wuz the one that she always set the plate on for him—the gilt edged chiny with pink sprigs.

But I'll bet that half or three quarters of that low melancholy groan of her'n wuz caused by the hardness of the job that loomed up in front of us, and the hull of mine wuz.

Wall, that night Josiah Allen wuz a-feelin' dretful neat, fer he had sold our sorell colt for a awful big price.

It wuz a good colt; its mother wuz took sick when it wuz a few days old, and we had brung it up as a corset, or ruther I did, fer Josiah Allen at that time had the rheumatiz to that extent that he couldn't step his foot on the floor for months, so the care of the corset come on me, most the hull on it, till it got big enough to run out in the lot and git its own livin'.

Night after night I used to get up and warm milk for it, when it wuz very small, for it wuz weakly, and we didn't know as we could winter it.



"I WOULD MEANDER OUT THERE IN A ICY NIGHT TO FEED IT."

We kep it in a little warm shed offen the wood house for quite a spell, but still I used to find it considerable cold when I would meander out there in a icy night to feed it. But jest as it is always the way with wimmen, the more care I took on it, the more it needed me and depended on me, the better I liked it.

Till I got to likin' it so well that it wuzn't half so hard a job for me to go out to feed it in the night as it would have been to laid still in my warm bed and think mebby it wuz cold and hungry.

So I would pike out and feed it two or three times a night.

That is the nater of wimmen, the weaker it wuz and the humbler it wuz, and the more it needed me, the more I thought on it.

And as is the nater of man, Josiah Allen didn't seem to care so much about it while it wuz weak and humbly and spindlin'.

He told me time and agin, that I couldn't save it, and it never would amount to anythin', and wuzn't nothin' but legs any way, and lots of other slightin' remarks. And he'd call it "horse corset" in a kind of a light, triflin' way, that wuz apt to gaul a woman when she come back with icy night-gown and frosty toes and fingers, way along in the night.



“ BEEN OUT TO TEND TO YOUR ‘HORSE CORSET,’ HAVE YOU?”

He'd wake up, a-layin' there warm and comfortable on his soft goose feather piller and say to me: "Been out to tend to your 'horse corset,' have you?"

"*Horse corset!* 'Wall, what if it wuz?"

Such language way along in the night, from a warm comfortable pardner to a cold one, is apt to make some words back and forth.

And then he'd speak of its legs agin, in the most slightin' terms—and he'd ask me if didn't want its picter took—etc., etc., etc.

(I believe one thing that ailed Josiah Allen wuz he didn't want me to get up and get my feet so cold).

But, as I wuz a-sayin', though I couldn't deny some of his words, for truly its legs did seem to be at the least calculation a yard and a half long, specilly in the night, why they'd look fairly pokerish.

And though I knew it wuz humbly still I persevered, and at last it got to thrivin' and growin' fast. And the likelier it grew, and the stronger, and the handsomer, so Josiah Allen's likin' for it grew and increased, till he got to settin' a sight of store by it.

And now it wuz a two-year-old, and he had sold it for two hundred and fifteen dollars. It wuz spozed it wuz goin' to make a good trotter.

Wall, seem' he had got such a big price for the colt, and knowin' well that I wuz the sole cause of its bein' alive at this day, I felt that it wuz the best time in the hull three hundred and sixty-five days of the year to tackle him for sunthin' to give to the fair. I felt that the least he could do would be to give me ten or fifteen dollars for it. So consequently after supper wuz out of the way, and the work done up, I tackled him.

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