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Lynn Watchman, Boston, Mass., Dec. 27, 1889.

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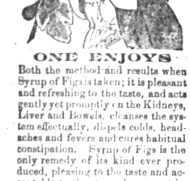

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A Runaway.

Two trotters, small and restless, cantered off one summer day,
And with them, all unwittingly, they took the Merry May,
Over meads and meadows fresh and green, with morning dew yet shining,
They galloped far away from town, these gentle Trot and Tramp.

As on they sped new sights and sounds did all their thoughts beguile,
Till Trot grew quite, said Trot to Tramp, "Let's stop and rest a while."
And dropping down on velvet sward they in their harness lay,
Nor ever gave a thought to her whom they had borne away.

But baby May was well content, and midst the grasses sat
And gathered starry daisies white, with dimpled fingers fat,
And curls of dandelion stems she in her tresses hung,
And to the wind she gilded wealth of blossoms gaily flung.

Refreshed and rested, Trot and Tramp once more were well on their way,
And with them, still bedecked with flowers, went merry baby May.
With spirits high, they galloped on by rill and through running brook,
And in and out, by crooked paths, their winding way they took.

But ere a half an hour had come, said Trot, in doleful mood,
"I would I could but lay me down, 'tis naught else for food."
Said Tramp to Trot, "In all my life I've never been so hungry,
Perhaps to do as we have done is something of a sin."

Meanwhile reigned fear and anxious thought o'er loss of baby May.
For none could guess the manner strange in which she went away.
Nor ever heroes, like unto these ponies, small, like they
Tramp and Trot,
Could feed and carry a little girl to such a far-off spot.

* * * * *

But while the sun was set on high, unharmed in wooded glade,
Was foiled asleep by mossy log, a dainty little maid,
And dangling from her shapely head, with hair of golden sheen,
Were flaxen lite, and wilted curls of dandelion green.

And with no room at all to spare the oddest place to shelter there,
Were Trot and Tramp, all safe and sound, while lo'ed the maiden's stare.

—Good Housekeeping.

ALL DOUBTS DISPELLED.

"Come to me, Robert, if you ever loved me in the old days, when we were so happy together in the quiet little home, and I will love you again." Ah, if I had never left it or trod You fair name of the child, and Robert, come, for I am dying, and I must see you in your care.

Your loving mother, MARGARET.

This was the note, written in a feeble and faltering hand—a woman's hand, mind you!—the note that pretty little Mrs. Robert Strong picked up off the carpet of her drawing room, where it had been dropped by her husband, in his hasty passage toward the hall and front door.

She picked it up, carelessly enough, at first. She was an honorable little lady, and would never have dreamed of rummaging her husband's private papers, or desk, or diary, as so many women would not scruple to do, if the occasion offered. Even this letter would have been laid aside till her husband's return, unread, had it not chanced to open in her hand, as she lifted it from the floor.

Her eyes fell upon the first line, and the red blood rushed instantly to her face. What wonder was this, who asked Robert Strong to come to her, by the love he had once borne her years before, in the happy home she had left forever with another?

Little Mrs. Strong had a long, hard battle with herself before she could make up her mind to read that note.

But she did read it at last, and, having "eaten of the apple" like her golden-haired ancestress in the garden of Eden, she instantly became as unhappy as she deserved to be.

She had been a governess in a family where Mr. Strong visited. Rich, influential, and still wealthy bachelor at home, though he confessed to "fifty-seven years of age, the stately, balding, the great "catch" of the season, pursued by all the fashionable belles of his acquaintance, and actually offered his hand, his heart, and his fortune to the acceptance of the little governess governess whom he had seen now and then at odd moments only, as she passed with her pupils up and down the grand staircase, or through the hall of his friend's house in —— street.

Of course she took him, and became Mrs. Robert Strong as soon as possible.

Yes, Mrs. Grundy was right there. Within a month of the nilliodaire's offer came his wedding-day, and then, after a short trip to the continent, the happy pair established themselves in Belgravia under the full glare of Mrs. Grundy's sharp and busy eyes.

But one thing Mrs. Grundy never knew, and would never have believed, had you told her till you were gray——

Of course the bride was the cynosure of all eyes in the pew with the pretty little bride. That Mrs. Grundy was quite willing to allow.

But it also happened that the bride was even more desperately in love with the bridegroom, strange as it may seem. She was twenty, and he was fifty-seven; and every one would have it that she had married him for his money and his luxurious home. In reality, she thought him the handsomest, stateliest, and most agreeable man on earth. But the severely classic style of his really beautiful face, his stately form; his dignified manner; even the calm firm glance of his deep blue eyes, frightened and awed her. She knew not why. She dared not show her love for him, even when she was his wife. And so he fancied at times that Mrs. Grundy was in the right. That his money had purchased for him a graceful and lovely woman to sit at the head of his table, and to take his arm in all places of public amusement; a woman in whose care his honor was safe, but in whose heart he had no share.

It was a sad and terrible mistake, and but for the coming of this mysterious *billet-doux* it might have lasted during both their lives.

Mrs. Strong, hiding that tell-tale note away, sat rocking to and fro in her own easy-chair, crying as if her heart would break.

This woman, this wretched woman! Her husband had come to her, was with her even then. How dared he love his wife like that. And the child! What child? whose child?

Again the red blood dyed her lovely face. They had no child. Perhaps he might have loved her, better—well, to what would, *she* would follow him now and know the—"Mrs. Grundy," since their marriage, had often whispered tales to her husband's discredit, but she refused to listen to, or bear; now she would see and judge for herself.

Going up into her own room, she summoned her maid, and confided a part of the miserable story to her, not implicating her husband in any way; but inducing the girl to provide for her the disguise of a servant's dress, and to accompany her in a cab, to the address named in the note.

Leaving the girl at the foot of the stairs the unhappy little wife stole up one flight, and listened.

A tall, bony-looking woman came out of a room opposite, with her apron to her eyes. It was the landlady of the house, who had been bidding her dying lodger a last farewell; and who had failed to see the intruder as she passed, weeping to her own room.

The latch of the sick-room being left ajar, Mrs. Strong saw and heard without any difficulty.

On the bed lay a wasted yet beautiful woman, young and still attractive, but dying—dying fast. Beside the bed sat her husband, holding the sufferer in his arms, while the dying drew down her forehead with a gentle hand, and talking to her in a low tone.

"Eloise, be at rest, be at peace!" he was saying. "For our—for my brother's sake I forgive you, even as she would have forgiven you, if she had lived."

"Then swore that you would not, Robert!" gasped the dying woman, with a look of pain.

"Hush, dear! Forget it, as I do. I was hasty and cold, and proud in those days, and I thought I could never see you as you are now without forgiving you. But, Eloise, since then, I too have learned of love, and I know better how to pity you. The man you married was unworthy of you, but you loved him, and for years you have suffered for his sake. I honor you for it now, Eloise, as much as I blamed your choice. I only wish I had found you sooner. So much suffering, so much unfolded self, might have been spared if you had only written to me before."

"I was proud, too, my brother," she said, faintly. "But, Robert, what has changed you so? You are as gentle as a woman. I don't know you now."

"I tell you that I, too, know what it is to love, Eloise," he said sadly. "I have a dear young wife, whom I treasure as the light of my eyes. She does not look nor act; she feels only gratitude towards the man who rescued her from a life of misery. But, dear, I hope to win her heart. Forbear