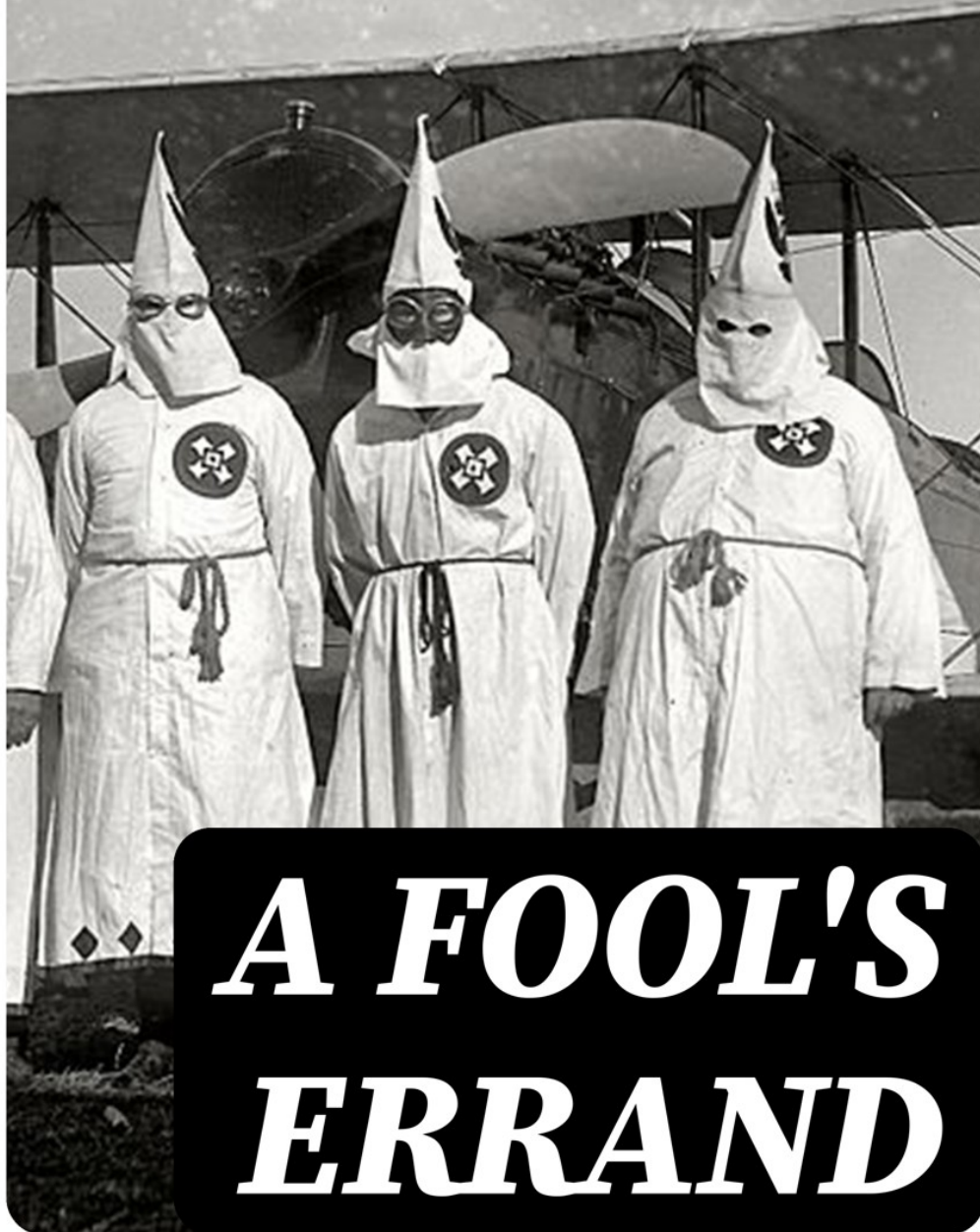


***ALBION WINEGAR
TOURGÉE***



***A FOOL'S
ERRAND***

Albion Winegar Tourgée

A Fool's Errand

Including "Bricks Without Straw"

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VARR. SERV. Thou art not altogether a fool.

FOOL. Nor thou altogether a wise man: as much
foolery As I have, so much wit thou lackest. *Timon
of Athens.*

Dedication

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TO THE
ANCIENT AND HONORABLE FAMILY OF
FOOLS
THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY AND LOVINGLY
DEDICATED
BY ONE OF THEIR NUMBER.

LETTER TO THE PUBLISHERS

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GENTLEMEN, — Your demand that I should write a "Preface" to the book you have printed seems to me utterly preposterous. It is like a man introducing himself, — always an awkward, and generally a useless piece of business. What is the use of the "prologue to the epic coming on," anyhow, unless it be a sort of advertisement? and in that case you ought to write it. Whoever does that should be

"Wise enough to *play* the fool;
And to do that well craves a sort of wit."

That is not the kind of Fool I am. All such work I delegate to you, and hereby authorize and empower you to say what you please of what I have written, only begging you keep in mind one clear distinction. There are two kinds of Fools. The real Fool is the most sincere of mortals: the Court Fool and his kind — the trifling, jesting buffoon — but simulate the family virtue, and steal the family name, for sordid purposes.

The life of the Fool proper is full of the poetry of faith. He may run after a will-o'-the-wisp, while the Wise deride; but to him it is a veritable star of hope. He differs from his fellow-mortals chiefly in this, that he sees or believes what they do not, and consequently undertakes what they never attempt. If he succeed in his endeavor, the world stops laughing, and calls him a Genius: if he fail, it laughs the more, and derides his undertaking as A FOOL'S ERRAND.

So the same individual is often both fool and genius, — a fool all his life and a genius after his death, or a fool to one century and a genius to the next, or a fool at home and a prodigy abroad. Watt was a fool while he watched the tea-

kettle, but a genius when he had caught the imp that tilted the lid. The gentle Genoese who wrested half the world from darkness was a fool to the age which sought for the Fountain of Youth; yet every succeeding one but multiplies his praises. These are but types. The poet has incorporated the recognized principle in the lines, —

"Great wits to madness, sure, are near allied,
And thin partitions do their walls divide."

It is, however, only in the element of simple, undoubting *faith*, that the kinship of genius and folly consists. One may be an unquestioned Fool without any chance of being taken for a Seer. This is, indeed, the case with most of the tribe. It is success alone that transforms the credulity of folly into acknowledged prophetic prevision.

Noah was one of the earliest of the Fools thus vindicated. The Wise Men of his day sat around on the dry-goods boxes, and whittled and whistled, and quizzed the queer craft on which he kept his sons and sons-in-law at work, till the keel was as old as the frigate "Constitution" before he was ready to lay her upper decks. If the rain had not come at last, they would never have got over laughing at his folly. The Deluge saved his reputation, and made his Ark a success. But it is not often that a Fool has a heavenly voice to guide him, or a flood to help him out.

This little tale is the narrative of one of Folly's failures. The hero can lay no claim to greatness. A believing Noah there is in it, a well-built ark, and an indubitable flood. But the waters prevailed, and the Fool went down, and many of the family with him. The Wise Men looked on and laughed.

The one merit which the story claims is that of honest, uncompromising truthfulness of portraiture. Its pictures are from life. And even in this which he boasts as a virtue may be found, perhaps, the greatest folly yet committed by

ONE OF THE FOOLS
SEPTEMBER 1879.

CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF FOLLY

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THE Fool's patronymic was Servosse; his Christian name, Comfort. His father was descended from one of those Gallic families who abandoned the luxuries of *la belle France* for an Arcadia which in these later days has become synonymous with bleakness, if not sterility. It is supposable that his ancestors, before they adventured on the delights of Canadian winters in exchange for the coast of Normandy or the plains of Bordeaux, may have belonged to some noble family, who drew their blood, clear and blue, from the veins of a Martelian progenitor.

It is, perhaps, but fair to presume that the exchange of skies was made only for the glory of our gallant and good King Louis, and the advancement of the holy Catholic faith in the New World, rather than for the peace and quiet of the immediate vicinage in which the ancestor dwelt. However this may be, a later ancestor was among those, who, with that mixture of courage and suavity which enabled the *voyageurs* of that day so successfully to secure and hold the good will of the unsophisticated red-skin, pushed westward along the Great Lakes until they came to the Straits, where so many advantages of a trading-post were combined, that Detroit was there located and christened.

The mutations of government, the lapse of time, and the anglicization of their surroundings had robbed the descendants of the original Servosse of every trace of their Gallic ancestry except the name; and it is only mentioned here for the benefit of some curious student of mental phenomena with credence in hereditary traits, who may believe that an ancestor who could voluntarily abandon the champagnes of Burgundy for the Heights of Abraham, by

whatever enticing name the same might be called, was quite capable of transmitting to his descendants such an *accès de la folie* as was manifested by our particular Fool.

Certainly, no such defect can be attributed to his maternal line: they knew on which side their bread was buttered. Of the truest of Puritan stock, the mother's family had found a lodgement on a little hillside farm carved out of the Hop-Brook Grant in Berkshire, which seemed almost as precarious in its rocky ruggedness and inaccessibility as the barn-swallow's nest, clinging in some mysterious way to the steep slope under the eaves of the old hip-roofed barn against which it was built. Yet, like the nest, the little hillside home had sufficed for the raising of many a sturdy brood, who had flown away to the constantly receding West almost before they had grown to full-fledged man- and womanhood. Brave-hearted, strong-limbed, and clear-headed, or, as they would now be called, *level-headed*, were these children of the Berkshire hills. There was no trace of mental unsoundness about any of them. Especially free from such imputation was Eliza Hall, the golden-haired, brown-eyed, youngest of nine, who, with her saucily upturning nose, a few freckles on her round cheeks, which made their peach-bloom all the more noticeable, — despite the entreaties of friends, the prayers of lovers, and the protest of parents, — would away to the West in her eighteenth year to become a Yankee schoolma'am in Michigan.

That the young lumberman, Michael Servosse, — rich in the limitless possibilities of a future cast in the way which had been marked out by nature as the path of advancing empire, a brave heart and unquenchable energy, to whom thousands of acres of unrivaled pine-lands yielded tribute, and whose fleet of snug schooners was every year growing larger, — that he should capture and mate with the fair bird from the New-England home-nest was as fitting as the most enthusiastic advocate of natural selection could desire. They

were the fairest types of remote stocks of kindred races, invigorated by the fresh life of a new continent.

The first fruit of such a union was the Fool, born on the first day of the month of flowers, in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, on the very spot where the Iroquois met in council with the great chief Pontiac when the cunning plan was devised to gain entrance to the fort by playing a game of lacrosse on the parade-ground for the amusement of the garrison. The wife of a year, as the perils of maternity drew nigh in the absence of her husband, who was up the lake attending to his spring shipments, began to sigh for her far-away mountain home, and so named the new life, which brought consolation to her loneliness, *Comfort*.

During his babyhood, boyhood, and youth, our hero manifested none of those characteristics from which he afterwards received the name by which he is known in these pages. He was reared with care. Though his father died while he was yet young, he left sufficient estate to enable the mother to give to her children every advantage of education, and divide a small surplus between them as each arrived at man's estate. The young Servosse, therefore, ate, drank, and slept, studied, played, and quarreled, like other boys. Like others who enter college, and have constitutions sufficiently robust to avoid dyspepsia arising from sedentary habits and the frying-pan, he left it at the end of four years, with a diploma properly signed and sealed, as well as very prettily printed on mock parchment, which was quite as good as veritable sheepskin for such a purpose. He studied law, as so many sensible men have done before his day, and with his first mustache was admitted under all the legal forms to sign himself "Attorney and Counselor at Law," and allowed to practice his art upon such clients as he could decoy into any of the courts of the Commonwealth of Michigan. Thereupon, putting in force the "*Circumspice*" which appeared upon the seal attached to his license, he

cast about for a place in which to set snares for the unwary, and pitched upon the town of Peru; hung out his shingle; obtained a fair business; married the pretty Metta Ward; and, in the summer of his twenty-seventh year, manifested the first symptoms of that mental weakness which led him to perform the task of unwisdom hereinafter narrated.

CHAPTER II

LE PREMIER ACCÈS

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IT was the 23d of July in his twenty-seventh year. He had been for several days in a very depressed state of mind, nervous and irritable, beset by gloomy forebodings, wakeful, and, when he did sleep, moaning as if in anguish of mind, talking in his sleep, or waking suddenly and crying out, as if in danger or distress. There was nothing in his social or business relations to justify any such state of mind. He was very warmly regarded by the little community in which he was settled, — a leader in its social life, an active member of the church in which he had been reared, and superintendent of its sabbath school. He had a good home, undistinguished by mortgage or incumbrance of any sort; a wife, whose energy and activity kept this home in the neatest possible condition, almost as it seemed without exertion, and certainly without the tyranny of servants; an office in the very center of the town, where it could not escape the search of the most unwilling or unobservant seeker; and a practice which yielded him more than he had any call to spend. All this should have made him the most contented and happy of men.

Yet, in spite of all these comforting surroundings, he had for a considerable time neglected his business to a marked degree, and seemed to have little interest in those things which ought most nearly to have concerned him. For the last few days he seemed to have had no heart or interest in any thing save the results of a battle, which was said to have been fought half a thousand miles away, in which neither he nor any one of his clients had an interest which could have been measured by the American unit of value or any fraction thereof. Yet this young attorney was refusing to

eat or drink, because he did not know the results of said battle, or perhaps because he feared that it might not turn out to his notion.

Metta, his young wife, was surprised and alarmed. Never before had there been any thing like trouble in the breast of her spouse, that he did not lighten his heart of at least half its load by at once revealing to her the cause of his annoyance. The difficulties of each puzzling case were talked over with her; and not unfrequently her pure unbiased heart had pointed out to him equities which his grosser nature had failed to perceive. Had he been cast in an action, he was sure to come home at night, perhaps dragging and weary with the story of his discomfiture, to receive consolation and encouragement from her lips; but this new trouble he had studiously concealed from her. At least he had refrained from all conversation in regard to it, and revealed its existence only by the involuntary symptoms which we have set forth. But who could conceal such symptoms from the eye of love? She had seen them, and wept and trembled at the evil that portended. She was no skilled student of mental phenomena; but, if she had been, she would have known that all these indications — insomnia, causeless apprehension, anxiety in regard to matters of no personal moment to him, moodiness, and studious concealment of the cause of his disquietude — were most infallible indications of mental disorder. Yet, although she did not know this as a scientific fact, her heart had diagnosed the symptoms; and the prescience of love had taught her with unerring accuracy to apprehend the evil which impended. With the self-forgetfulness of womanly devotion, she had concealed her sorrow from the purblind eyes of the dull mole whose heart was occupied only with the morbid fancies which were eating their relentless way into his soul. She wept in secret over what she foresaw, and pressed her hands with tearful beseeching to her troubled heart, while her white lips uttered the prayer, which she felt

could not be answered, "I pray Thee, let this cup pass from me!"

Yet she met him, through whom she knew this affliction must come, ever with smiles and gladness. At morn she kissed him farewell, as he stood on the vine-covered porch of their little cottage, when he started for his office, while the balmy breath of the summer morning blew over them, and the bees hummed from flower to flower, sipping the honeyed dew from the throats of the unclosed morning-glories. At noon, when he came for the mid-day meal, the door flew open before his hand had touched the knob, and she stood before him in the little hall, draped in the neat, cool muslin which became her so well, a smile upon her lips, and inextinguishable lovelight in her eyes. And when he would sit in moody silence after their pleasant tea, while the evening shadows fell around, — brooding, ever brooding, over the evil which he would persist in making his own, — she would steal into his lap, and her soft arms would clasp his neck, while her lips would not rest from prattle or song until bribed into silence by kisses or laughter. Never had his home been so sweet. Never *could* home be sweeter. Yet all this seemed only to increase his melancholy, and make him even more moody and disconsolate.

On the previous day he had come home before the tea-table had been set, — an hour before his usual time; but somehow she had expected that he would do so. She had peeped through the blinds of her little chamber, and seen him coming; so that, as he climbed wearily up the steps, he found her standing on the lower stair in the hall, her lips wreathed in smiles, and her head crowned with roses, as she waited to spring into his arms.

"O Metta!" he said in an agonized voice, as he clasped her to his breast, and then put her away, and looked into her blushing face and into the eyes which were crowding back the tears she was determined should not flow, — "O Metta, we are beaten!"

"In what case?" she asked, at once pretending to misunderstand the purport of his words.

He saw the pretty little trick; but he was too sad, and melancholy had taken too firm a hold upon him, to allow him to reward it with a smile.

"Alas!" he sighed, "this can be laughed away no longer. Blood has been shed. Not a few lives, but a thousand, have been lost. Our army has fought at a place called Bull Run, and been terribly defeated."

CHAPTER III

SORROW COMETH WITH KNOWLEDGE

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THERE were no more smiles in the cozy home after that announcement. He had brought with him a newspaper, whose horrible details absorbed his attention, and from which he read aloud to her, as with noiseless step and white lips and ashen cheeks she went about preparing the evening meal, of which they had partaken together for the last time alone. Another presence — grim and terrible — sat at the board with them that night, and imbittered all the sweet viands which her pretty hands had prepared with such loving care. The name of this presence was *War*. It sat opposite the wife, and over against the husband. Its shadow blighted his brain, and paralyzed her heart. She could not eat; and the Fool noticed dully, when he could lift his eyes from the paper beside his plate, that there were great black circles about her eyes, which were not there when he had first met her in the hall that morning.

After supper he went out, which was another sign of mental alienation; since he had never before known a time when he would willingly leave his pretty home and gentle wife for the society of men. He stayed late, and she pretended to be asleep when he came in. She had been weeping in her loneliness; and her heart was so sore that she could not venture to give him the good-night kiss, which she had never before omitted. In the morning there was the same heaviness; and the same Shadow sat with them at the breakfast-table and mocked at the Fool, as he read the morning's paper, and did not see the tears that rolled down the wife's cheeks.

He did not come home to dine, but sent word that he was too busy to leave his office; and it was late when he came to

supper. His melancholy seemed to have departed; and he was strangely, unnaturally cheerful and tender to his young wife. He came up the steps with a bound, took her lovingly from the lower stair, where she generally awaited him, and, when he had kissed her a dozen times or so, bore her in his arms to the dining-room, where the tea-table was already spread. Through the whole meal he rattled on of every thing except the fearful Shadow which sat opposite, and which *he* pretended not to see. When the meal was over, he led his wife into the sitting-room; and taking a seat by the window, over which clambered a rose-tree, some blossoms from which were in her hair, he seated her upon his lap, kissed her again and again, and finally said in tremulous tones, —

"Metta, the governor has called for more troops."

There was no response, except that the bowed head upon his breast nestled closer, and there was a sound of a sob choked down in the white throat.

"Don't you think, Metta, that I — that is — we — ought to do something — for the country?"

Then came a little wailing cry.

"Didn't I pick lint for two whole days, and sew bandages, and roll them; and [a burst of tears] I'm sure I'm willing to do it every day — if — if — if it will do any good."

Then the tears flowed in a torrent, and the slender form shook with successive sobs, as if a great deep had been suddenly broken up.

"Oh, I didn't mean that!" said the Fool. "Don't you think I ought to do something? — that I ought to — to — go?"

"Go! where?" came the response in assumed wonder; for she would not understand.

"To the war, dear," he answered gently.

"What!" she cried. "You! you! my husband! Oh, it is not, it can not be so! Surely there is no need of that. Can we not do enough — our share — without that? O darling, I should die!"

She sobbed as if about to make good her words, and clung about his neck with kisses and tears mingled in distracted confusion.

"Oh, if I should lose you! Darling, darling! think of our pretty home! your bright future, and — and," she whispered something in his ear. "Surely some must stay at home; and why not you?"

"Nay, nay, darling," he said, "do not tempt me! I know it is hard; but I could not look you in the face, and know that I had shirked the call. Nay more, my darling! I could not gaze without a blush into the innocent face of that little child, if I should fail to take a man's part in the great struggle which the nation is waging with the wrong! I could not see your babe, and think that it might some time blush for its father's cowardice!"

As if it could make any possible difference to the little one who was expected, whether its father continued a thrifty and prosperous attorney, as he had hitherto been, or became a red-handed slayer of men! or, indeed, whether the said heir expectant would not be better pleased, and his interests better served, by his father taking the former course rather than the latter!

However, the young wife saw that it was useless to argue with a mind so evidently distorted in its apprehension of facts, and lay weeping and sobbing in his arms until he had fired her fancy with bright pictures of military glory and the sweets of the return home, when Peace should crown him with laurels, and spread a feast of all good things for the heroes who went forth to battle for the right.

So, in a few days, he marched forth clad in the foolish foppery of war, avoiding his wife's tearful gaze, and taking pride and credit to himself for so doing.

He was the captain of the "Peru Invincibles," which constituted Company B of an infantry regiment, that did an incredible amount of boasting at the outset, a marvelous amount of running soon after, and a reasonable amount of

fighting still later in the Civil War, which had then just begun.

This species of mental alienation was then of such frequent occurrence that it might well be regarded as epidemic. It displayed itself chiefly in an irresistible inclination to the wearing of blue clothing and the carrying of dangerous weapons, together with a readiness to use them in a very unpleasant and reckless manner. There were many mild cases, in which the mania manifested itself in very loud and reckless talk about what ought to be done. These cases were not at all dangerous, as they never went beyond that point. The persons acutely affected received different names in different localities. In some they were called "Boys in Blue," "The Country's Hope," and "Our Brave Soldier-Boys;" while in others they were termed "Lincoln's Hirelings," "Abolition Hordes," and "Yankee Vandals." It may be observed, too, that the former methods of distinguishing them prevailed generally in the States lying to the north, and the latter in those lying to the south, of what used to be called "Mason and Dixon's line." Both meant the same thing. The difference was only in the form of expression peculiar to the respective regions. All these names, when properly translated, signified *Fools*.

CHAPTER IV FROM BAD TO WORSE

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FOUR years have elapsed, and our Fool is lying on the greensward, under the clustering maples, in front of the little cottage from which he marched away in stoical disregard of his young wife's tears.

A rollicking witch, whom he calls "Lil," is fighting a sham battle with the soldier-papa whom she has never seen until a week before, but whom she now tramples and punches and pelts with that sublime disregard for the feelings of the assaulted party which shows the confidence she has in his capacity to "endure hardness like a good soldier." Resting with her back against the tree-trunk, with a mass of fluffy white cloth overspreading the light dotted muslin which rises about her in cool profusion as she sits among the long grass, is Metta, the brave young wife, whose tears ceased to flow when she found they were powerless to detain the Fool away from war's alarms, and were all turned into smiles, and treasured up to await his return and restoration to his right mind.

Ah! many a thousand times her heart has stood still with fear for him; and now, as she playfully watches the struggle going on, we can see that there is an older look upon her brow than we had marked there before. The gray eyes have a soberer light, though brimming over with joy; the lips, a trick of closing sharply, as if they would shut back the sob of fear; and the hand wanders often to the side, as if it would hush by its presence the wild beatings of a sad heart. No wonder; for the Shadow that sat at their table four years before had breakfasted, dined, and supped with her ever since, until the Fool came back a week ago. She knows that she has grown old, — lived many a decade in those four

years; but she has quite forgiven the unconscious cause of all her woe, and is busily engaged in preparing garments which shall carry no hint of his unfortunate malady. Indeed, it may be said that she has some pardonable pride in the *éclat* with which he returns. He has been promoted and gazetted for gallant conduct, and general orders and reports have contained his name; while the newspapers have teemed with glowing accounts of his gallantry. He is colonel now; has been breveted a brigadier-general, but despises the honor which comes as a thing of course, instead of being won by hard knocks. He is over thirty; and, as he romps with their first-born, she looks forward to how many ages of ecstasy in the sweet seclusion of their pretty home.

"There, there, Lily! go and play with Pedro," she says at length. "You will tire papa. He is not used to having such a sturdy little girl to romp with him."

She is half jealous of the child, who shares her husband's attention which she has hungered for so long. The child goes over to the old Newfoundland who is stretched at ease on the other side of the tree; and, when the parents look again, her golden curls are spread upon his shaggy coat, and both are asleep. The wife draws her husband's hand upon her knee, lets fall her needle, and forgets the world in the joy of his presence and of communion with him.

"Do you know, Metta," he said after a long silence, "that I have half a mind to go back?"

"Back! where?" she asked in surprise.

"Why, back to the South, whence I have just come," he answered.

"What! to live?" she asked, with wide, wondering eyes.

"Certainly: at least I hope so," he responded gayly.

"But you are not in earnest, Comfort, surely," with an undertone of pain in her voice.

"Indeed I am, dear!" he replied. "You see, this is the way I look at it. I have been gone four years. These other fellows, Gobard and Clarke, have come in, and got my practice all

away. It could not be otherwise. If not they, it must have been some others. People must have lawyers as well as doctors. So I must start anew, even if I remain here."

"But it will not be difficult," she interrupted. "You do not know how many of your old clients have asked about you, and were only waiting for your return to give you their business again."

"Of course; but it will be slow work, and I have lost four years. Remember, I am over thirty now; and we have only our house and the surplus of my savings in the army, — not any thing like the competency I hoped to have secured by this time," he said somewhat gloomily.

"But surely there is no haste. We are yet young, and have only Lily. We can live very snugly, and you will soon have a much better business than ever before. I am sure of that," she hastened to say.

"But, darling, do you know I am half afraid to stay here? It is true I look brown and rugged from exposure, — as who that went to the sea with Sherman does not? — and my beard, which has grown long and full, no doubt gives me a look of sturdiness and strength; but for several months I have been far from well. I weigh much less than when I left here; and this old wound in my lungs has been troubling me a deal of late. Dr. Burns told me that my only chance for length of days was a long rest in a genial climate. He says I am worn out; and of course it shows at the weak point, just like a chain. I am afraid I shall never practice my profession again. It hardly seems as if I could stand it to sit at the desk, or address a jury."

"Is it so, darling?" she asked with trembling lips, while the happiness fled out of her face, and left the dull gray which had come to be its accustomed look during those long years of waiting.

"Yes," he answered tenderly; "but do not be alarmed. It is nothing serious — at least not now. I was thinking, as we had to begin over after a fashion, whether, considering

every thing, it would not be best to go South. We could buy a plantation, and settle down to country life for a few years; and I may get over all traces of this difficulty in that climate. This is what the doctor advises."

"But will it be safe there? Can we live there among the rebels?" she inquired anxiously.

"Oh," he responded promptly, "I have no fear of that! The war is over, and we who have been fighting each other are now the best of friends. I do not think there will be a particle of danger. For a few months there may be disorders in some sections; but they will be very rare, and will not last any time."

"Well, dear," she said thoughtfully, "you know that I will always say as Ruth did, and most cheerfully too, 'Whither thou goest, I will go.' You know better than I; and, if your health demands it, no consideration can be put beside that. Yet I must own that I have serious apprehensions in regard to it."

"Oh," he replied, "there must be great changes, of course! Slavery has been broken up, and things must turn into new grooves; but I think the country will settle up rapidly, now that slavery is out of the way. Manufactures will spring up, immigration will pour in, and it will be just the pleasantest part of the country. I believe one-fifth of our soldiers — and that the very best part of them too — will find homes in the South in less than two years, just as soon as they can clear out their old places, and find new ones there to their mind."

So he talked, forgetful of the fact that the social conditions of three hundred years are not to be overthrown in a moment, and that differences which have outlasted generations, and finally ripened into war, are never healed by simple victory, — that the broken link can not be securely joined by mere juxtaposition of the fragments, but must be fused and hammered before its fibers will really unite.

CHAPTER V

THE ORACLE IS CONSULTED

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THE doubt which Metta had expressed led the Fool, a few days afterwards, to address a grave, wise man, in whose judgment he had always placed much reliance, in order to obtain his views upon the proposed change of domicile. So he wrote to his former college-president, the Rev. Enos Martin, D.D.: —

"MY DEAR OLD FRIEND, — The fact that I paid so little heed to your monitions when under your charge, is perhaps the reason why I prize your opinion upon any important matter now. I would like to have your views on the question following, promising to weigh them carefully, though I may not act upon them.

"I am considering the idea of removing my household gods to Dixie. So far as my personal characteristics are concerned, you know them better than any one else probably, except myself, and would not take my own estimate of what you do not know. I can muster a few thousand dollars, — from eight to ten perhaps. I have come out of the war a little the worse for what I have been through; having some trouble in or about one lung, no one seems to know just where, and some other mementos of the affectionate regard of our rebel friends. I find my practice gone, of course, and am a bit afraid of our cold winters. As I desire your views, I will not give mine. Of course I must burn my bridges if I go. I am too old to face a future containing two upheavals.

"Yours ever,
"COMFORT SERVOSSE."

In a few days there came this answer: —

"MY DEAR COLONEL, — I am glad to hear you are considering the question stated in your letter. Of course I can not *advise* you, in the ordinary sense of that word; nor do I suppose you desire that I should. I can only give my general impressions in regard to the future of that part of the country to which you think of removing.

"It is too soon to speculate as to what will be the course of the government in regard to the rebellious sections. A thousand plans are proposed, all of them, as it seems to me, crude, incomplete, and weak. One thing is certain, I think: no one will be punished for rebellion. It is true, Davis and a few others may be invited to go abroad for a few years for the country's good, and perhaps at its expense; but it will end there. There will be no examples made, no reprisals, no confiscation. At the same time, if the results of the war are to be secured, and the nation protected against the recurrence of such a calamity, these States must be rebuilt from the very ground-sill. I am afraid this is not sufficiently realized by the country. I have no idea of any immediate trouble in the South. Such exhaustive revolutions as we have had do not break forth into new life readily. It is the smoldering embers which are to be feared, perhaps a score of years hence. And this can be prevented only by a thorough change in the tone and bent of the people. How much prospect there is of such change being wrought by the spontaneous action of the Southern people, I do not know: I fear, not much.

"It seems to me that the only way to effect it is by the influence of Northern immigration. Of course the old economies of the plantation and the negro-quarters will have to give way. The labor of that section must be organized, or rather taught to manage itself, to become automatic in its operations. The former master is not prepared to do this: First, because he does not know how;

and, secondly, because the freedman has no confidence in his old master's desire to promote *his* interests. There will be exceptions; but this will be the rule. In this re-organization, I think men who have been acquainted with free labor will be able to give valuable aid, and accomplish good results. I look and hope for considerable movements of population, both from the North to the South, and *vice versa*; because I think it is only by such intermingling of the people of the two sections that they can ever become one, and the danger of future evil be averted. Should the present controversy be concluded, and new States erected in the recently rebellious sections, without a large increase of the Northern element in their populations, I am confident that the result will be but temporary, and the future peace of the country insecure.

"As to the social and financial prospects of persons removing there, I suppose it depends very much on the persons themselves, and the particular locality to which they go. I should say you were well fitted for such pioneer work; and, if you should conclude to go, I wish you all success and happiness in your new home, and trust that you may find there friends as devoted and sincere as you have hitherto secured by an upright and honorable life.

"May God bless you and yours!

"ENOS MARTIN."

By this letter, both the notions of the Fool and the fears of his wife were strengthened. Metta, seeing him grow more and more settled in his determination, did not think it worth while to offer any further opposition; but consoled herself with the reflection that her husband's health was the thing of prime importance, and smothered her fear with a blind, baseless hope, that, because what he purposed doing was a thing born of good motive and kindly feeling, it would be prospered. Some people call that "faith;" and it is no doubt a

great consolation, perhaps the only one, when reason and common sense are squarely opposed to the course one is taking.