

**LIVE AND
LET LIVE**

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Live and Let Live by Catharine Maria Sedgwick

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CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK

**LIVE AND
LET LIVE**

LIVE AND LET LIVE.

BY

MISS SEDGWICK,

AUTHOR OF

"THE POOR RICH MAN AND THE RICH POOR MAN," "HOME," ETC.

"And whereas the Turkish spy says he kept no servant because he would not have an enemy in his house, *I hired mine because I would have a friend.*"—COWPER.

LONDON:

JOHN GREEN, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

1837.

265.

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LIVE AND LET LIVE.

CHAPTER I.

SIN THE PARENT OF WANT.

It was one of the coldest days felt in New York, during the winter of 182—, that a baker's cart made its accustomed halt before a door in Church-street. It was driven by Charles Lovett, the baker's son, whose ruddy cheeks, quick movement, and beaming eye, bespoke health, industry, and a happy temper. This latter attribute seemed somewhat too severely tested by the tardiness of his customer; for in vain had he whistled, clapped his hands, stamped, and repeated his usual cry of "Hurry! hurry!" He at last leaped from his cart on to the broken step of the wretched dwelling, when the upper half of the door was slowly opened, and a thinly-clad girl appeared, who, in answer to his prepared question, "Why, what ails you? are you all asleep?" replied, "Mother does not wish any bread this morning."

"Don't wish any! then she's easily served;"

and, thus huffily answering, he was turning away, when another look at the girl touched his kind heart. "Tell me honestly," he added, "what is the reason your mother don't wish the bread."

The little girl's voice was choked, and the tears gushed from her eyes as she answered, "She has not a shilling to pay for it."

"That's blamed hard this cold morning, besides being tough—but take the loaf; we can trust you."

"No; mother had rather not. Father is sick, and it takes all she can earn, every penny, to buy things for him and *Jemmie*."

"Well, take it for a gift, then," said the boy; "I'll speak to my father about it;" and, thrusting the loaf into her hands, he jumped into his cart and rattled off. For a month after, Charles Lovett called daily at that house of want, and left a shilling loaf. This is no fiction, but one of those beautiful facts that deserve to be rescued from obscurity.

The little girl ran up to her mother's apartment, a back-room on the second floor. "Lucy, my child!" exclaimed her mother, reprovingly, on seeing the loaf of bread. Lucy explained in a low voice, to avoid her father overhearing her, who was lying ill in his bed. Mrs. Lee brushed away a tear. "Did not I always tell you so, mother?" asked Lucy.

"Tell me what?"

"I mean, did not I tell you that boy always looked so kind, and spoke so civil? I knew he was good." Children have an instinct as infalli-

ble as a chemical test in detecting the presence of certain qualities.

Mrs. Lee prepared some toast and tea for her husband and a little deformed boy in the cradle, and then sat down with her three girls to a breakfast on rye-mush.

The parents of Lucy Lee our humble heroine, were married some fifteen years before our story begins. Richard Lee was then a young lawyer in a country town in New England. His wife had no near kindred, but she had been kindly cared for, and well nurtured in the family of a distant relation; and having a small fortune, and a good education, in the best sense of the word, that is, having had her faculties well developed and prepared for the uses of life, she had a rational prospect of prosperity and happiness. Her husband was an only son, who had talents, ardent feelings, amiable manners, and a small but sufficient fortune to begin life upon in a country where the current sets to prosperity. Such a beginning would have secured pecuniary independence, unless singular misfortune had intervened, or vice had appeared to counteract and destroy the operation of the laws of Providence. Vice it was. Six months after her marriage, Mrs. Lee discovered that her husband was in the habit of intemperate drinking. How the seeds of this habit were sown in his childhood, by his parents' foolish indulgence of the cravings of his appetite for whatever tasted good; how appetite, combining with the selfishness that is nurtured by low animal gratifications, obtained so

early the mastery over his better nature,—it is not our purpose to describe. We would only add this to the thousand examples before the eyes of parents, to admonish them, that to secure to the future man temperance and health, the child's appetites must be subdued to obedience.

When Mrs. Lee discovered her husband's weakness, she was inexperienced and hopeful. She remonstrated and supplicated; he promised and she believed. For years they went on, he sinning, and she sheltering him and enduring in silence. But love and fidelity have no shelter broad enough to conceal such habits; they betray themselves. Richard Lee forfeited the confidence of the community. He lost his business, and his property melted away. He moved from place to place, and finally went to the city of New York, where, during one of those episodic reforms that occur in every drunkard's life, he resolved to turn over a new leaf. He obtained copying from a prosperous lawyer who had been a college contemporary. For a while the stimulus of a new position operated favourably, and the wants of his family were supplied by his labour. But excess soon followed abstinence. Returning home late in a cold evening from a grog-shop, he fell on the ice, broke his leg, and lay exposed to the inclemency of the weather till rescued and conveyed to his home by a watchman. A long and fatal illness followed.