

Sharing joy and sorrow

There was once a tailor, who was a quarrelsome fellow, and his wife, who was good, industrious, and pious, never could please him. Whatever she did, he was not satisfied, but grumbled and scolded, and knocked her about and beat her. As the authorities at last heard of it, they had him summoned, and put in prison in order to make him better. He was kept for a while on bread and water, and then set free again. He was forced, however, to promise not to beat his wife any more, but to live with her in peace, and share joy and sorrow with her, as married people ought to do. All went on well for a time, but then he fell into his old ways, and was surly and quarrelsome. And because he dared not beat her, he would seize her by the hair and tear it out. The woman escaped from him, and sprang out into the yard, but he ran after her with his yard-measure and scissors, and chased her about, and threw the yard-measure and scissors at her, and whatever else came his way. When he hit her he laughed, and when he missed her, he stormed and swore. This went on so long that the neighbors came to the wife's assistance. The tailor was again summoned before the magistrates, and reminded of his promise. "Dear gentlemen," said he, "I have kept my word, I have not beaten her, but have shared joy and sorrow with her." - "How can that be," said the judge, "when she continually brings such heavy complaints against you?" - "I have not beaten her, but just because she looked so strange I wanted to comb her hair with my hand; she, however, got away from me, and left me quite spitefully. Then I hurried after her, and in order to bring her back to her duty, I threw at her as a well-meant admonition whatever came readily to hand. I have shared joy and sorrow with her also, for whenever I hit her I was full of joy, and she of sorrow, and if I missed her, then she was joyful, and I sorry." The judges were not satisfied with this answer, but gave him the reward he deserved.

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