

RUTH.

She stood breast high among the corn, Clasp'd by the golden light of morn, Like the sweetheart of the sun, Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush Deeply ripen'd—such a blush In the midst of brow was born, Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell, Which were the blackest none could tell, But long lashes veiled a light That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim, Made her tressy forehead dim— Thus she stood amid the stocks, Praising God with sweetest looks.

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean Where I reap thou shouldst but glean; Lay thy sheaf about and come Share my harvest and my home! —Thomas Moore.

THE RUBY HEART.



UNT JESSICA had been round the world more than once. She had been what is vulgarly called a "globe trotter." In her day she had collected many rare and curious and beautiful things; but now she was an old woman, and her time was come to die in the great silent house, filled with the furniture that had belonged to Aunt Jessica's forbears many score years ago, and enriched by the spoils of many lands, brought home by the energetic hands of Aunt Jessica herself.

There was one treasure above all that I coveted, and that I would have sold my soul to have had for my own—my cousin Edith. As for the money—well, I am not more disinterested than most people; but I would rather have had Edith without a penny than all Aunt Jessica's money without Edith.

William and Edith were sitting in the dining-room. Edith was above, helping poor aunt in the hard work of darning. Three raps came on the floor. We knew they were a signal that we were to go up, and that aunt had asked for us; and up we went.

"I have left everything divided among you four," she said; "and the ruby heart is to go to whichever of you three boys can find it." She spoke slowly and with difficulty. I remembered the jolly old days when she used to come and see us at school and tip us, and I wished that death and time could have been more merciful. She went on.

"You know it has a charm to make you happy in your love. It would have made me happy, but he died, and it hadn't a chance to do its work; and now my time's come—it has been weary waiting."

And with that—the first and last hint we ever had of a romance in my aunt's life—she turned her wrinkled old face to the pillow with a sigh like a tired child's, and there were only four of us left in the room.

After the funeral and the reading of the will we three men set to work to find the charm. "I shall take the library and aunt's bedroom first," said Edith. As these were the rooms she had most used, I imagine he thought he had made the best choice. "You other fellows can arrange as you like!"

William chose the drawing-room and the guest chamber, and they took the whole day searching systematically inch by inch for the ruby heart. I began to look in the dining-room, but Edith came in.

"Do you care so very much for the ruby heart?" said she. "I confess I should like to find it," I answered. "Shall I help you to look?" She pulled out a book or two from the shelves in an aimless, desultory way, and then said:

"It's very unsuited out of doors, don't you think?" So we went on the river. The next day I began to look for the heart again. Edith sent her duenna companion (who had once been her governess) to ask me if I did not think it would be nice to drive. Of course I said I thought it would, and off we went.

That evening she asked Edith and William if they would like to come out next day to see some ruins. "Thanks," said Edith, "but I think my first duty to my poor aunt's memory is to find that heart." "Besides," said William, who never had much sentiment, like Edith, "it's worth thousands of pounds, I believe." "To say nothing of the charm," I added.

But I couldn't bear to stay in the old house alone where she was so kind to me. It's better to go out, and I'm sure she would have wished it. I felt that it was foolish of me not to make an effort to find the ruby heart. So next morning I got up very early and came down before the servants were about. I had pulled out half the drawers of the Chinese cabinet and looked into them, when my heart leaped into my mouth at the touch of a hand on my shoulder—Edith's!

"Still after that wretched ruby?" she said. "How you waste your time!" "Why? Don't you think I shall find it?" "I don't know," she said, looking at me with her eyes wide open, "but I don't think you will find it there, because Edith has been through that three times already. Did you ever eat strawberries before breakfast and gather them yourself?"

So we went into the kitchen garden and ate strawberries till the gong rang for breakfast. Edith and William were getting quite sulky and savage from the non-success of their search, and the little time I had devoted to it annoyed them. "I believe," said Edith, with an air of gaiety, a little overdone, "that Wilfrid thinks he knows where the heart is, and that he can put his hand on it at any moment."

"I wish I could," I said. "So do I," said Edith, almost in the same breath. "You wish Wilfrid to find the heart?" said William. "Why?" "Oh, no. I don't mean Wilfrid; I meant—at least—Well, we shall all be glad when it's settled one way or the other, shan't we?"

I had never told Edith I loved her, because I didn't know how my aunt was to leave her money, and if Edith was to be heiress of the whole—but anyone will understand my reasons. It was a week after aunt's funeral that I went into the rose garden, where Edith was snipping roses into a basket. "I've been looking for the heart again," I said, "but I haven't found it."

"No," she answered, "and I don't suppose you will. Would a Gloire de Dijon be any compensation?" She began to stick one in my coat as she spoke. Her slender waist, in its black gown, was very near my left arm, where she stood. "I will take the bud," I said, "but not as compensation for the heart."

"Don't you think," she asked me, "that it might be possible to live happily without a charm to help you?" "No," I said, "not without a charm to help you. But ruby hearts are not the only charms in the world." My arm fell on her waist. "Let them find their ruby heart! Let them chop it into pieces and divide it between them and sell the bits," said I. "And you are content with what you have?" she asked.

"I am content with what I have," I answered, and my other arm went round her. They never found that ruby heart, though the poor old house was tapped and tested from top to bottom. At last, wearied out, they took the portion of goods that fell unto them and went, fortunately for us, into a far country. And Edith and I were married.

We didn't go on a wedding tour, but came straight back to the dear old house. On the evening of our wedding day we walked in the moonlight through the rose garden to listen to the nightingales. I stopped to hold her in my arms on the very spot where I had first kissed her, and the light shawl she wore round her head and shoulders fell back. "What's that you have round your neck?" I said, for something darkened amid the white lace on her breast.

She did not answer. I put up my hand, touched with a thrill the whiteness of her neck, and found in my fingers the ruby heart! "Then she gave it to you," I said; "it is yours?" "She gave it into my keeping," answered Edith, dropping her chin till her lips rested on my hand; "but she left it to the man who should find it." "And I have found it—here!"—The Argosy.

Once Wasted. Modern man is gradually waking up to the fact that he can utilize everything. Coal is not only a source of heat and light, but a storehouse of colors, tastes, medicines, perfumes and explosives. From 140 pounds of gas tar in a ton of coal over 2,000 distinct shades of aniline dyes are made. The same substance furnishes quinine, antipyrine, atropine, morphine and a host of other drugs.

Of perfumes there can be obtained heliotropine, clove, queen of the meadows, cinnamon and bitter almonds, camphor and wintergreen. It gives us its bellite and perite, two powerful explosives, and supplies flavory extracts which cannot be told from currant, raspberry, pepper and vanilla. Scientists also get from the coal tar benzene and naphtha and the photographic gets from it his hydroquinone and lithogen.

It gives forth paraffin, pitch and creosote, material for artificial paring, saccharin which is 500 times sweeter than sugar; lampblack, material for red ink, oil, varnish, rosin and a great supply of ammonia. Mr. Holiday—"So you think that you would like to take the position of superintendent of the works? Don't you think it better for you to seek a more humble place at first?" Rollo—"Why, sir, you have told me that there is always plenty of room at the top. Surely, you would not have me crowd the worthy men who are lower down."—Boston Transcript.

CROKER WITHOUT FEAR.

The Tammany Leader Once Swam Out Among a School of Sharks. It is said that Richard Croker, the Tammany boss, is a man absolutely devoid of physical fear and to prove it a story is told of his great nerve. Some years ago a New York newspaper printed an article which stated that the talk of sharks eating human beings was all rubbish; that they were afraid of men and would swim away in consternation if a man were suddenly to appear before them. Among those who became interested in the matter was Mr. Croker and he declared the



only way to settle the controversy which the article started was to put a live man in front of a shark and watch the result. He further remarked that some day he would find out for himself.

One winter or two later Croker decided to spend a few weeks in Florida and he was accompanied on the trip by Andrew Freedman, now president of the New York Base-Ball Club. Not far from St. Augustine there is a place where sharks may often be seen lying motionless in the space between the shore and the bar. The water is almost always as clear as glass, and the huge fish are plainly visible. The first time Croker saw the sharks at this point he told Freedman he was going to find out whether they would eat a man if they got a chance. Next day he and Freedman went out there again, taking with them two good-sized chunks of raw beef, one of which they put on a big hook, intending to use the meat as a bait and haul in the first unlucky fish that should venture on a nibble. But owing to the powerful though smooth and quiet ocean swell, it was impossible to throw the bait out far enough to attract the attention of the sharks. This was tried and tried again, but to no purpose; every time the baited hook was cast it was brought back by the irresistible force of the long swells. Finally Croker got tired, and seizing a piece of beef in his hands he ran out as far as he could, then gave a dive, and with half a dozen impetuous strokes swam out to the group of alleged man-eaters, and dropped his burden before them.

Freedman was dumfounded, and shouted to his friend to come back at once; but almost before he could get the words out of his mouth Croker was again standing on shore, dripping and breathless, having got away from the sharks with all possible speed. "But the sharks hurried away as fast as my friend Dick did," Freedman always says in winding up the story, "from which I conclude that they were worse frightened than he; in fact, he didn't seem frightened at all."

Croker thinks the incident proves that sharks are afraid of man. There are probably few, however, who would believe this evidence conclusive. A Practical Test. Dom Pedro, the last emperor of Brazil, was a man of a practical turn of mind, as the following story told of him well illustrates, says Harper's Round Table.

He once gave an audience to a young engineer who came to show him a new appliance for stopping railway engines. The emperor was pleased with the idea, but wished to put it to a practical test. "Day after to-morrow," said he, "have your engine ready. We will have it coupled to my saloon-carriage and start. When going at full speed I will give the signal to stop and then we will see how your invention works."

At the appointed time all was in readiness. The emperor entered his carriage, the young inventor mounted his engine and on they sped for several miles as fast as they could go. There came no signal, and the engineer began to fear that the emperor had fallen asleep. Suddenly the emperor came to a sharp curve around the edge of the cliff, when, to his horror, on the track directly ahead of them the engineer saw a huge boulder.

He had just sufficient presence of mind to turn the crank of his brake and pull the engine up within a couple of yards of the fatal block. Here the emperor put his head out of his car window and demanded to know the cause of the sudden stoppage. The engineer pointed to the rock, and much to his surprise, Dom Pedro began to laugh. "Push it to one side and go on," he said, calmly.

The engineer obeyed and kicking the stone was still further astonished to see it crumble into dust before him. It was nothing more nor less than a block of starch which the emperor had had placed on the rails the night before. Onions for Brides. Among the Greeks the onion was formerly used at marriages, a jar of lentils, one of snow and one of onions being spoken of as gifts to the daughter of King Cotys upon the occasion of her marriage to Iphicrates. In some places, even now, onions are thrown after brides, as is rice in our land.

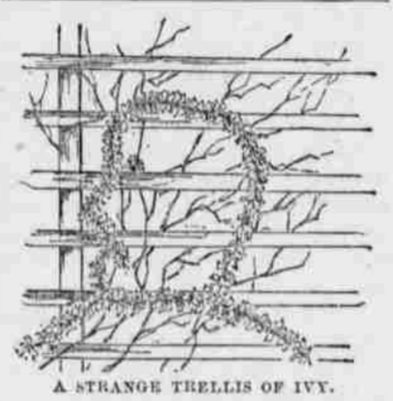
In the south of England this patriarchal plant was used by girls to divine their future husbands. When the onions were purchased for this purpose it was necessary for the purchaser to enter the shop by one door and go out by another; it was, therefore, important to select a greengrocer's shop which had two doors. Onions bought in this careful way, if placed under the pillow on St. Thomas' eve, were warranted to bring visions of the future husband. Country girls were also wont to take an onion and name it after St. Thomas. It was then peeled and wrapped in a clean handkerchief, after which, placing it carefully on their heads, the maids would say: Good St. Thomas do me right And let my true love come to-night, That I may look him in the face And him in my fond arms embrace.—Chautauquan.

Mr. He dined in silence and alone, and so did she. Often Mrs. Jerolamen had to speak to her husband in reference to household affairs, but he never answered. He was a church member, being one of the organizers of the Mount Arlington Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1874 the town was divided on the question of prohibition. The old man tried to induce the members of the church to endorse the cold water ticket at the town election, but they refused. He swore that he would never go to church again. He kept his word in this as he had toward his wife.

Thus his life went on in gloom and gloom until a recent Monday. Then he could not arise in the morning, for pneumonia had laid its grip upon him. He was 80 years old and he felt that he could not recover. His wife bent over him with the love that all his harshness had never killed. He saw the light in her eyes, and feebly essaying to take her hand he sobbed: "Dear, I'm so sorry. Will you forgive me?" Forgive him? Would she? Kneeling by the dying man's bedside, she wept softly, while he, with tongue freed at last, rambled on deliriously about old times. She did not leave him until the end came. He died with his hand in hers and a look of happiness that his face had not borne in twenty years.

FORMS A HUMAN HEAD.

Queer Figure Outlined by the Tiny Leaves of an Ivy Vine. Ivy is known to be a very accommodating creeper and often forms queer figures of its own free will, but the vine in the yard of James Hughes of Philadelphia is the queerest of the queer. The sketch shows the form outlined by the tiny green leaves. Many people visit Mr. Hughes' house to find out how the strings are arranged, but it would take an exceedingly fine memory to retain the plan so as to produce a similar effect. Some of the visitors



A STRANGE TRELLIS OF IVY.

have made a sketch of the entire vine, but as yet none has reported his success in copying the oddity.

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