

THE OLD RAIL FENCE.

How well I remember the old rail fence
At the foot of the narrow lane
Where we never parted down the bars,
Or to put them in place again.

But scrambled through, though the space
Between
Was hardly an inch too wide;
And laughed if we happened to lose our hold,
And go plump on the other side!

And oh, how jolly it was when we
Those berries high could scale,
And perch like roosters, and flap our wings,
And crow on the topmost rail!

And the smallest one of the merry group,
A gay little girl, she
Would cry if the bars were let down for her,
For she wanted to help herself.

In all the frolics, the games, and plays,
So dear to the children's hearts,
They are learning lessons that serve them well,
When the days of youth depart.

And those who fearfully climbed the fence
At the risk of their heads,
Will never delay at a task, nor wait
Till some one else down the bars.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

"What is this, Bert?"
"That is the mortgage of an estate
called the Derby place, Mr. Faxon, fore-
closed more than a year, I believe."

"Well, it's what I have been looking
for. I will take charge of the papers,
and attend to the matter soon. Down
East, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."
Mr. Faxon put the papers into the
breast pocket of his coat, came down the
stairs, and stepped into the glittering,
purred-up limousine, beside the papers.

The delicate Arabian, Mrs. Faxon's
horse, sped away out of the city confines,
and soon tossed his jenny mane along the
open roads, lined with garlands, ornate
cottages and villas.

"Going away again to-morrow, dear?"
asked Mrs. Faxon, suddenly lifting her
fair countenance, as she interrupted her
husband. "You seem to be away all the
time lately. Take me with you."

"Not this time, Violet."
And Violet Faxon's husband fell into
a fit of abstraction, from which her
smallest chatter failed to arouse him.

They came at last to the Faxon man-
sion, grand and simple, and fulfilling its
promise of a beautiful interior.

Amid the white lace and crimson silk
of her chamber, Violet was brushing out
her long, fair hair, when her husband
paused in the doorway, and looked at
her sharply. Then he came slowly across
the room, and lifting the oval face in his
hand, looked closely at the delicate cheek,
palely as a new-born babe.

"What is it?" asked Violet—"a
freckle?"

"No," he answered, smiling faintly
and strolling across the chamber. "You
looked like my sister then—that was all."

"Your sister?" asked Violet. "You never
told me about her," said Violet.

"No," he answered, and said no more.
Mr. Faxon bore no resemblance to his
delicate patrician wife. A little less than
thirty—dark, strongly built, active,
vigorous, he impressed one as a strong
character. If, with a remarkably rich
complexion of countenance, there were
some sensual lines, there was also a cer-
tain evidence of strong good sense and
a look of deep experiences. Mr. Faxon
looked like a man who carried a road
wound away among the mounds of ver-
dure.

After a glance around, Mr. Faxon took
this road, and walked slowly along. The
robins hopped across it; the bobolinks
sang in the trees over it; the unassuming
white clover among the grass pre-
sented the cool morning air.

He passed only a few houses, but he
observed them attentively. They were
all old and humble farmhouses. Appar-
ently this property which, by the
foreclosure of a mortgage, fallen to Mr.
Faxon, was not situated in a very rich or
enterprising neighborhood.

When he had walked nearly a mile, he
came to a green dooryard, among wide-
spread apple trees, with a well-kept
among them, a residence, though plain,
more pretensions and comfortable than
the others.

There was a narrow, well-worn path
among the short grass and buttercups to
the porch, where a bitter-sweet twined its
strong arms. In a corner, under the ver-
dure was an arm-chair with a book on the
seat, and a cane lying across it—a
gnarled, twisted cane of hickory, that
Mr. Faxon looked twice at. The book
he saw was a bible.

There was an old lady with a sweet,
faded face, and snowy cap-tied, tied
under her double chin, knitting at a
window near by, but his quiet stop had
not disturbed her.

He had put his hand to the knocker,
he took it down again as he caught sight
of this placid face. He stood there, quite
still for several minutes. A gray cat
came and rubbed against his leg. Some
apple blossoms, floating down, touched
his cheek.

At length the gentle lips moved. "You
had best lie down and take a rest,"
"Such old people! and I have come to
take their homes away," said Mr. Fax-
on.

There was strong pain in his dark face
now as he stood looking down at the
porch-floor.

After a moment, he stepped off the
porch on the farther side, and walked
away under the apple trees.

When Mr. Faxon came back from his
brief stroll, his presence, as he crossed
the yard, was unobscured.

A white-haired old man, who had come
to the open door and taken up the
hickory stick, turned back hastily, with
a few hurried words and the aged woman
dropped her knitting and rose up, with a
paleness dropping over her face.

But, while Mr. Faxon stood on the porch
again, both came to the door. Sad
startled faces they both had, but they
were civil. Their greeting was kindly, as
to a friend.

"My name is Faxon," said the visitor,
"I—"

"We know who you be, sir," said the
old man—"we know who ye be, though
we never seed ye before. Will you
come in?"

Mr. Faxon stepped across the white
hall floor into the parlor, cool and com-
fortable sitting-room.

The rough blue paper, like ointment,
on the wall, some "honesty" and dried
grasses in oblique white vases upon the
high, narrow mantelpiece, unconsciously
struck his eyes, while he took a seat, his
mind occupied upon other thoughts.

"We've been long expectin' you, sir,"
said the old lady, gently.

Her hands, crossed on the spotless
gingham apron upon her lap, trembled a
little, but the serenity of her manner was
not much changed.

But the old man's eyes swam in tears.
He rested both hands on the hickory
stick between his knees, as he sat in a
corner, and bending his forehead upon
them, partially hid his face.

"Yes, yes! but it comes sort of sudden
now," said the old man.

Mr. Faxon sat in speechless sympathy.
After a little pause, old Mr. Derby
looked up and met his eyes.

"Of course, it's all right, sir. We
don't question your right to the place,
but we've been sort of unfortunate. I
think so, don't you, mother?"

The old lady lay back among the
cushions of the dimly-covered chair.
She had a look of physical weakness Mr.
Faxon had not observed before. She did
not speak.

Her husband looked at her attentively.
A sudden flush went over his thin face.
"It is not for myself, but for the papers,"
he cried, striking his cane violently upon
the floor. "She helped care this place,
when she was young. There was no
kind of work but what them hands you
see lyin' so weary now in her lap, sir,
was put to."

She was up early in the
morning, a-doin' a-doin' of one and the
children. God never made a better wife
an' mother. And now, sir, it's hard, it's
hard, that she should be turned out of
her home in her old age!"

"Hush, hush, Daniel!" said the old
lady softly. "The Lord will provide;
and it's not long we have to stay in this
world you know."

"Will you tell me the history of the
place Mr. Derby?" asked Mr. Faxon.

"How did you come to lose it?"

"It was mortgaged, sir," said the old
man, looking at his wife. "You see, we
had three children—Selwyn, Roscoe and
little Annie. Mother an' I didn't have
an education, but we said all along that
our children should have; an' they went to
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He gave me a good position, and I de-
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mother, I have a good wife and the best
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"Ah, indeed! What loving old woman
is not pleased with her grandchild! Soon
the house was graced by the presence of
Violet Faxon and the lovely boy, whom
grandfather could not praise enough;
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"I like your wife; and do you know,
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Saturday Night.

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JUDE CAXTON'S WORD.

"I never break my word!"

That was Jude Caxton's boast. He was
a rich man, a proud man—and he had
four beautiful daughters. At home and
abroad his integrity and his pride in it
were proverbial.

He had made a large fortune, and he
had made it honestly, without tricks or
evasions; and it had given him a solidity
in the social as well as the shipping
world, which was a great advantage.

He was a man of great energy, and he
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