

NIGHTLY EPISODE.

Crispy air.
Lovely night;
Twinkling stars;
Spirits bright;
Bashful man;
Timid maid;
Both in love.

"S'reply."
HE June sunshine poured generously in at the wide doors of the Merritt 'great barn,' and the large, cleanly room partitioned into a carriage house was full of the breath of summer.

Opposite the door stood the family 'surrey' wearing the drapery provided for the winter, and in one corner was a lofty pile of sleighs, of various patterns and sizes. On the same side of the door stood the rafter frame of the hand-loom, and high in state above it was seated the mistress of the farm house. Many happy solitary hours Mrs. Merritt spent there.

She 'loved to write,' she said, in her quiet, meditative voice. But this love was not merely for the weaving. It was more for the pleasant and some of the summer weather, and for the kindly leisure of life's afternoon. The peaceful task belonged to summer as much as did the swaying of the daisies and the hum of the bees. The loom stood neglected and forgotten, but in the late days of May, when the grass was already deep and green by the footpath, and the apple trees had their last lingering blossoms, the longing for the dreamy, delightful task would awaken, and Mrs. Merritt would bestir herself to set up a 'web.'

The old loom had come to her by inheritance, and she valued it as she treasured the ancestral homespun linen, and the family traditions which extended back to the first settlers. 'These brothers that came over from England,' she had often told her daughters of the remote grandmother who, when the men of the family had departed, carried off the pick of the household armament on an excursion to Ticonderoga and Crown Point, despoiled her home and her children of the best of the Merritts' silver, and had fled to the mountains, where she had lived in the fact that the loom had been framed of oak timber cut when all the hillsides beyond Roaring Brook was a wilderness. But if 'mother' pleased, it was all right.

And Miss Sarepta Toker even was welcome to bring her knitting-work and sit in the doorway, and tell who was dead, and who was married, from Roaring Brook to the Nephew. For Sarepta possessed married sisters and cousins in half the towns of the county, which gave her an immense advantage in news.

She was a meager little woman, who had never been credited with much alertness of mind or body. It added a little brightness to her eyes when she even looked on from the outside at the life and stir, and coming and going, at 'the Merritt place.'

And in the intervals when 'S'reply' sat and knitted, with her eyes shut to visible things, she was no more hinderance to the placid musings of Mrs. Merritt than would have been a cat dozing in the sun.

Back and forth moved the shuttle, then followed the dull stroke of the batten. Occasionally the weaver would descend from her seat to turn the ratchet of the beam upon which the fabric was being woven.

'How nice you do beat up your weavin'!' exclaimed S'reply, rousing herself to admiration. 'Miss Minks ain't do her'n, and Rosalia has said time and ag'in she wouldn't send any more rags to her; but then she's kinder sorry for her.'

'It's hard for her to struggle along,' said Mrs. Merritt, 'and Rosalia has said time and ag'in she wouldn't send any more rags to her; but then she's kinder sorry for her.'

'Your loom got kind o' crowded out of the house, didn't it?' said S'reply. 'The old furniture has got to go. Reminds me of what cousin Spencer Doolittle said when Square Lane fledged round an' got him turned out of the gallery to the Baptist meeting-house. He'd played the bass viol to lead the singin' for forty year. There ain't no room left for the stable foundations of order,' sez he. 'Folks must keep underminin' an' counterminin' an' improvin', sez he.'

'It was my notion having the loom set up out here,' said Mrs. Merritt. 'He says it's my amusemant for summer weather, that I have to have, just as the girls play croquet and tennis.'

Another long, dreamy silence, except for the shuttle that went on and on.

There was a sound of wheels, and all semblance of slumber fled from Sarepta's eyes as there appeared at the front gate a very shiny top-buggy. And when in a few moments a slender shadow fell across the doorway, and Lois Merritt entered, no detail of her appearance was unobserved. The girl was tall, like her mother, with the same large, serious cast of countenance.

'What awful little bunbits they be a-wearin'!' said Sarepta, as if obeying an irresistible inner prompting. Lois received placidly this implied criticism of her new summer millinery, and her mother thought complacently: 'Lois don't mind S'reply. Emma and Lucia ain't no even-tempered. They'd have fared up.'

It required but little urging to induce the visitor to stay until after dinner. She had been one of the great treats of Sarepta's childhood to go home from school with Lucia.

'I don't see, mother,' said Emma Merritt, as with a sigh of relief she watched Sarepta's departing footsteps, 'how you can like to have her come here so much. It's just to see and hear, and then go and tell. And she doesn't meddle with anything that's going on, for all that she keeps her eyes shut.'

good. You make excuses for everybody, and there's nobody you'd refuse to speak to. I do believe you would visit with a caterpillar, if you thought it would be pleased.'

This seemingly absurd conjecture was verified. The next day, as Mrs. Merritt sat in solitary state at her loom, there came upon the window sill a great, fat, green caterpillar, moving with dignity, as became a creature whom splendid destiny was to transform into a still more magnificent specimen of the human species.

The shuttle lay idle as for some minutes Mrs. Merritt watched, and admired, and even talked softly to her guest. All this would have seemed out of foolishness. Sarepta, had she been present. Her mind must have been constructed on a larger scale, after all, for she reserved her curiosity for the human species.

When at twilight she was again spending the afternoon at Mrs. Merritt's, but she did not occupy her usual seat, commanding a view of the house.

She had crowded her chair into a narrow space beside the loom. The window was above her head as she sat unobtrusively busy in darning a separate rent in her brown alpaca dress. She had caught it upon a stake which was driven beside the path; one of several stakes which were visible from the doorway. Though her place was a great public wrong, she was not of lofty indignation. Her own special grievance of the torn gown only added to her wrath at what she deemed a great public wrong.

'For months there had been talk of a proposed new railroad. At last the line had been surveyed, and it crossed the Merritt farm, running between the house and the great barn.'

'S'reply had lost no time in going to condole with her friend. 'Here I be a-settin', mendin' a dress on the place she remarked. 'It's sartin' somebody's goin' to tell a lie about me, but I guess I can read it if they can, 's long's 'tain't the truth. Wish I could make them railroad folks buy a new dress! But you might 't damage,' she went on. 'I just spiles your posy garden. It's lucky the girls is growed up big enough to keep off 'em the track.'

'An' to have 'em comin' along screechin' in the middle of the night, shakin' the very pillars under your head! I know how 't Sister Church's. But the wust was they were diggin' an' blastin' an' great stones a-flyin', an' Keturay's folks had to live all cluttered up in the all-part, an' all nerved up when a blast went off. An' when they went to meetin', the road was all blocked up in front of Eben Clay's house, an' they had to drive up over the bank, expectin' the road to slip off 'em the aiga. An' her a-lookin' out o' the front window, crosser'n out o' the front was wheelmarks on the terriss, as she called it.'

'To such a road will be easier to build here,' said Mrs. Merritt. And now they've begun, they say they're going to rush it through.'

'But the emigrants will have to come, them Eypatians,' said S'reply. 'An' the shanties will be right under your nose, an' there they'll be cookin' themselves, an' livin' on black bread.'

'Even the mix o' the emigrants is at cannibalistic tendencies on the part of the workmen, did not seem to shake the placid nerves of Mrs. Merritt.'

'You're making a good, workman-like job of that tear,' she said kindly. 'There's very few can beat you at mendin', S'reply.'

'S'reply drew her thread with a steady hand. She was used to less disinterested compliments than this; hints pointing directly to great baskets full of fastened garments which had accumulated ready for her needle.'

'Mother,' said Lois Merritt one morning some days later, 'here is Bradford Toker. He says S'reply is very sick and he wants to see you.'

'Yesum,' said in a small boy at the door, 'S'reply says if you want see her alive again, to come soon's you can.'

'How long has S'reply been complainin'?' inquired Mrs. Merritt. 'Oh, most a week-an' las' night we was kep' up with her 'bout all the forepart of the night,' said the small boy, with a canonical air. 'She was out o' her head, an' took on pretty bad.'

'I'll go over to your house as soon as I can,' said Mrs. Merritt. 'She's been dretful lighty,' said Azariah, who she led the way to the sick-room. 'She's been goin' on about bein' took up, an' about your bein' run over by the engine, an' 'bout bein' killed by the engine. An' she's been cold a day or two, an' she was over to your house, Monday she couldn't get up. I had my hands shooked at the most, killed him. But he's a great hand to read, Bradford is, an' he took the last Roaring Brook Argus upstairs an' read it through to S'reply, advertisements and all. Somethin' 'bout bein' killed by the engine, she begun to act kinder wild then, he thought. But of course we all know that the intellex of S'reply's mind ain't over keen at the best of her times, an' havin' so much read to her right out kinder dazed her.'

It was a very pale, drawn face which Mrs. Merritt encountered a moment later—that of the supposed victim of too much learning, but there was in the eyes a feverish brightness which gave them more expression than usual. S'reply said but little, and that in very feeble tones, until there came a call from below which her sister-in-law was obliged to heed.

Then the invalid started promptly into a sitting posture and drew from under her pillow a newspaper, which she handed to Mrs. Merritt. 'I got Bradford to bring it up here, an' say nothin',' she said. 'Now read that item.'

word about it, even to Silar.' S'reply's eyes lost something of their distracted look.

'That's just like you, Lucindy,' she said. 'I should have to have it in everybody's month, arter I was gone, how I just missed bein' took up, by dyin'.'

'But S'reply, what in the world did possess you, a woman of your years, to cut up such a crazy caper?' 'Twas all on your account, Lucindy. Comin' home from your house, I got thinkin' about the railroad track runnin' between the house an' the barn, an' if I didn't run ag'inst another stake an' tear my dress wuss'n 'twas before. An' that night I drempt how you got ag'inst to the barn, to do some weavin', an' the cars come along an' run over you.'

'There, there, don't think any more about it,' said her friend. 'But S'reply, 'So nex' night, when Azariah an' his wife was gone to the strawberry festival, I cut across to your home-loom. I knew your folks was gone to the Center too, but I was afeared somebody'd be in, an' I should have to have to peek it. I'd no idee how hard it would be gettin' them sticks up, but I remembered how good you'd allus ben to me. I tried to come home a shorter way, but I got ag'inst somebody's follerin'; I got into that spring place in the Lloyd lot, an' got my dress wet an' my shoes.'

'You poor thing, you!' said the object of all this ill-starred loyalty. 'I think that you should have some much trouble on my account! The railroad folks have acted real fair by us. And I wouldn't say anything about it yet, for you know how everything goes, but we expect to move in the next fall.'

'You don't say!' exclaimed S'reply with considerable animation. 'Yes, he's been thinking for a long time the place he's been ag'inst to carry out, seein' the boys ain't ever goin' to take to farmin'. And the creamery folks want it, and he had a good chance to buy the Ford place at the Center.'

'What a queer house with the pillars in front?' inquired S'reply, much revived. 'Yes, and so I gave my consent. It's home to me where my folks are. The girls urge me to leave. I suppose, if nothing happens, Emma will live right next door to us.'

'What has Emma Jane an' John Kilborn made up?' queried S'reply, forgetting her feebleness and sitting up. 'Yes, and I suppose there will have to be a double wedding!' said Mrs. Merritt.

'Well, I never!' said S'reply. 'Lois ain't goin' to be married, too?' 'The girls wouldn't thank me for telling, but you won't mention it. That's the way with 'em. When you move, I can't go an' set with you an' see you weave, even if I should ever get up ag'in,' sighed S'reply, drooping on her pillow.

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SNAPSHOTS AT SOLONS

HOW THE LEGISLATURE WORKS THE DEADLOCK.

What a Little Pitcher Saw and Heard from Her Desk in the House.

Viewed from the desk of a lady clerk, the Oregon legislature is a queer institution. I am just now engaged in drawing the princely salary of \$3 a day in the service of the state, and my time is fully occupied in watching the signs of a general election, and battle array to prevent the election of an U. S. senator.

The committees have all been appointed and their clerks selected, but although many that once sat in the session is gone the committees have done nothing because it takes all the time of each member to see that no other member's vote shall count against the action of a senator.

My admiration for the astounding fortitude with which our tired brothers grasp and discharge their mighty intellectual duties each day actually knows no bounds, and I am sure would be shared by anyone who might witness their daily sessions.

Each session is opened by prayer, and as the minister implores the assistance of the Giver of all good to intercede for the members of the legislature, the prayer is not independent, and especially if he is an Oregon legislator, he patriotically represses any infringement on the time-honored principles of the framers of our constitution.

The first thing of an exciting nature that occurs each day is when a measure of some importance comes up and if the author of it discovers that a single member is absent, he immediately moves a "call of the house," the proper officer is directed to lock the door, the roll is called, and the sergeant-at-arms ordered to proceed to the committee room where Mr. B. is sitting. I have considered and bring forth the delinquent statesman. However, before the officer gets out of the door the gentleman who made the motion at once moves that further proceeding be suspended, and the speaker is obliged to withdraw, which motion always carries unanimously and the great work of law-making goes on again with accelerated slowness. Just why a call of the house is necessary, I do not know, but the object of it has been explained, seems strange to a lady clerk, but we know it is wise or our poor tired brothers wouldn't do it.

The speaker of the house is in praise of our esteemed speaker of the house who takes every means of making it easy for the new members. Every time he puts a motion to the house he says "The inviolable principle of the house is that no member shall be present unless he has been called by the speaker of the house." This is a rule which is never suspended, and the speaker of the house is in praise of our esteemed speaker of the house who takes every means of making it easy for the new members. Every time he puts a motion to the house he says "The inviolable principle of the house is that no member shall be present unless he has been called by the speaker of the house." This is a rule which is never suspended, and the speaker of the house is in praise of our esteemed speaker of the house who takes every means of making it easy for the new members. 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