

THE GOBLIN GOOSE.

A CHRISTIAN BISHOP.

Once, it happened I'd been dining, on my couch I slept reclining.

And awoke with moonlight shining brightly on my bed-room floor.

It was in the bleak December, Christmas night as I remember,

But I had no dying ember, as Poe had; when near the door,

Like a gastronomic goblin just beside my chamber door

Stood a bird—and no more.

And I said, for I'm no craven, "Are you Edgar's famous raven,

Seeking as with him a haven—were you mixed up with Lenore?"

Then the bird sprang and flutter'd, and this sentence strange he uttered—

"Hang Lenore," he mildly exclaimed; "you have seen me once before,

Seen me on this festive Christmas, seen me surely once before,

I'm the Goose"—and nothing more.

Then he murmured, "Are you ready?" and with motion slow and steady,

Straight he leapt upon my bed. I simply gave a stifled roar,

And I cried, "As I'm a sinner, at a Goose Club I was winner.

This memory of my dinner, which I ate at half-past four,

Goose well stuffed with sage and onions, which I ate at half-past four."

Quoth he hoarsely—"Eat no more!"

low down at night, when, with her basket on her arm, she ambled homeward.

One evening a gentleman passing that way just at dark found the table almost untouched, and the old woman in a great deal of trouble.

It had rained all day, and few lovers had come upon the Common, so with apples and clothes weeping in sympathy with her sorrow, she sat there with no one to help her home with her basket.

It is said that evil loves the dark; but it is quite as true that many good things avoid the daylight.

Other's eyes are then open, and the fear of what "men may say" often sends us sneaking by on the other side, like the Priest and the Levite in the parable.

But now it was dark; so the gentleman shouldered the apple basket and went home with the old woman. She lived in a small room, on the top floor of an old rickety house at the north end; and as he went up the stairs the gentleman was in mortal fear of their tumbling down, and spilling both him and the apples.

At last, however, he reached the room, and setting down the basket, sat himself down to rest his tired legs and shoulders. It was a narrow, mean apartment, and so low that, when he stood upright, his head almost hit the ceiling.

Two young children, a boy and a girl, who were spreading the table for the evening meal, and a thin, emaciated woman, with sunken eyes and pallid features, who was lying on a bed in a corner were its occupants.

The floor was bare, the furniture plain and poor, and everything indicated that its tenants lived on the verge of starvation; but on all their faces was a cheerful look that showed that somehow they had imbibed of that divine elixir that gives to the most wretched comfort and contentment.

Curious to get at the secret of their happiness, the stranger asked the old woman about her history. Twenty years before, she said, her two sons and her husband had died, leaving her destitute and alone with one child—a little daughter.

Too weak to work, and unwilling to beg, she then resorted herself to street vending, and, by hours of daily toil, managed to support herself and bring up her daughter. At twenty the latter married a worthless fellow, who broke her heart, and then cast her penniless upon the world with a young son, the little boy who was then setting the table.

The old woman took them in, and about this time also adopted the little girl, who was an orphan child of a poor neighbor.

"And were you able to support them all by vending apples?" asked the gentleman.

"No, sir," she answered, "I tried to, but I couldn't. My darter was sick, and couldn't do nothing, and we got into debt twenty dollars. Then, as if to make bad worse, I was taken down with the rheumatics. I was down with them for a fortnight, and when I got up couldn't get around like I could afore; so no knowin' what to do, I went with my basket onto a bench nigh the frog pond.

Folks came to me amazin' that day and at night I had two dollars clean profit. Then I saw the Lord's hand; He know'd I couldn't make a livin' going round, so he gave me the rheumatics, to show me it was best to open a stand on the Common."

"And since then you have made both ends meet?"

"Yes, sir; since then I have been prospered wonderful. I've paid off the debt, and now when I want to I can lay in a stock of ten dollars, and that you know brings apples cheaper."

"But have you no fear for the coming winter?"

"No, sir. It's two months off; I can make thirty dollars afore it comes, and that with what sewing and washing I can do will take us round to the fine weather."

"Sir, sir," she said, "please to stop, I want you to see! I shall soon be well; for now I can go out every day in fine weather."

"And who got you down the stairs and upon the Common?"

"The man that lives on the lower floor—he carried me down; and Tommy drew me here before school time."

"And who sent as the wagon?" asked the old woman, her ugly face lighting up with a smile that, this man always made it handsome.

"The Lord, I suppose. All good things come from Him; and this seems to be a good wagon," answered the gentleman, taking the vehicle by the wheels and shaking it as if to test its quality.

The old woman looked at him for a moment, without a word. Then she said: "The Lord will say to them on his right hand, 'Ye did it unto me, in as much as ye did it unto one of these, my poor children.'"

The man turned and walked away in his eye a tear, and in his soul another revelation. He had learned the whole of religion—faith and works—at the cost of carrying an old woman's basket, and buying for her daughter a cheap hand-wagon.

Every pleasant day for a month after this he found the sick woman seated there in the wagon under the old umbrella. She always had a smile for him, and he always lingered awhile to get the smile and a little of the old woman's sunshine. But one morning he went by, and found there neither the apple-stand nor the handsome wagon. It was so, too, when he went by again at evening; and then, without going home, he made his way to the home of the old woman.

Softly opening the door he entered the dingy apartment. A few rays from the setting sun came through the open window, and by the dim light he saw the old woman and two children kneeling by the low bed in the corner. She was holding the hand of the young woman, who lay with her eyes upturned to the fading sky, as if looking in the clouds for some one coming. He had come, the Great Angel, and he had already taken her to the bosom of the All-Father.

For several years after this the old woman's life rippled along as smoothly as a gentle stream flowing on over a sandy bed to the great ocean. The old umbrella got many a patch, and the new bonnet grew old, and the black silk gown that she first wore at her daughter's funeral was turned and returned to fit to appear on Sundays; but she never begged, and never borrowed, and the winter was never so hard but she had enough ready money at command to buy her small wares "by wholesale."

Little by little the young lady and hungry lovers who frequented the Common came to know her; and though many a rival apple stand from time to time disputed her right to monopolize the trade, in stomachache they had to eat their own candy, and to "fold their tents like the Arabs, and silently steal away."

One day the gentleman who had learned of her first lesson in Christianity passing her stand, noticed some new laws of true floating from her pippins. "Who wrote these, Aunt Betsy?" he asked, pausing to look at the placards.

"Oh, Tommy did them, sir. He's amazin' smart at such things. He can write like any schoolmaster."

"And how old is he now?"

"Going on fifteen; and I'm thinking, sir, it's about time he was doing something. I might support him some longer; but he's learned all he can learn outside of college."

"What does he take to?"

"Well, he wants to be a merchant. I suppose he gets a hankerin' arter it from my bein' in the business; but there's a world of wickedness between buyin' and sellin'." Don't ye think he'd better be a lawyer?

"A lawyer! There's not an honest lawyer living. Let him be a merchant. Send him down to my counting room tomorrow."

Tommy went, and so became under clerk in a large commercial house on the Central Wharf. When he drew his first month's pay he brought it home, and pouring it into his grandmother's lap, then threw his arms about his neck and said:

"Now, grandmother, you shall shut up shop. I won't have no more of your selling apples."

But the old woman was not so easily lured from the "walks of commerce." She still kept her stand on the Common; but in summer, she staid at home on rainy days, and in winter, laid by, like the frogs, doing neither washing nor sewing.

So three years passed away, and then Fort Sumpter fell, and President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers to suppress the rebellion. When Tommy went home that night with the news, his grandmother was thoughtful for a time, then, looking in his face, she said:

"Tommy, the country has done everything for you; hadn't you better do something for the country?"

"You mean I ought to volunteer," said Tommy.

"Yes; if Mr. Speeple is willing."

Mr. Speeple was willing; and so, soon afterwards, a queer scene was witnessed on the common. The whole parade ground was in commotion. A regiment, which had been under review, was marching out of one of the gateways, and the old woman, perched on her three-legged stool, was wildly waving her umbrella, and, at the top of her lungs cheering the departing soldiers. At her back sat a little maiden, holding her head in her hands, and trying to hide her tears in her handkerchief. This was Rose; and Tommy was going away with the regiment.

He was the only stay of his grandmother; the only hope of her eighty years; but cheerfully, and at her own prompting, she had given him up to the country. The country had done everything for him; he ought to do something for the country.

He was away several months, and then came back, re-enlisted, and went away again, leaving his bounty with his grandmother. After this he was often heard from, and always with honor; and the old woman seemed to grow young again, in recounting his daring deeds to some patient listener at her apple stand. "Just to think," she would say, with tears in her eyes, "that such a poor woman as I am should rear such a brave boy for the country!"

At last news came of a great battle.

The Old Love and the New.

BY A. E. C.

"In two years, Alice, I am coming back with my fortune made to claim you."

These had been John Maxwell's last words, and there had been a fire in his eye, and certain lines of determination about his mouth, which argued that he would make them good. But the two years had passed, and for the last six months Alice Tower had heard nothing.

Sitting under the trees one warm May afternoon, she idly wondered whether his silence gave her pain or pleasure. When John had bidden her good-by by the thought of his return had been the sustaining power in the moment of his departure. Though she had shed bitter tears over the story of his many failures; though she had received with gladness the knowledge of his first successes; though she had once waited with impatience for letters that did not come, she now felt it to be almost a relief.

Ah! Alice would not whisper to her own thoughts that there had been another teacher; that not so easy would have been the lesson of forgetfulness had not another lesson been conned in its stead. It was all a bewildering maze in the little head under the masses of rich brown hair, with just a glint of red among them as the sun gave them its farewell kiss.

But a brighter red stole into the rounded cheek as a well-known step drew nearer, and a shadow for which the trees were not responsible was thrown beside her.

"Good evening, Miss Alice," said a cheery voice. "I thought I should find you here. The evening is too lovely for indoor life."

"Yes," she answered, "it is very lovely."

"As it should be," he added, in lower more impressive tones, "to grace your presence. Alice," he continued, throwing himself on the ground beside her, "shall I tell you why I am so glad to find you here? Because to me it seems the most fitting place to tell you something else, which though you must already know, it is fit that I should put in words. They are poor words, darling. I am not versed in eloquence; and even were I, eloquence might stammer. But here are words as old as the world itself—'I love you.' I have but one hope in life, and that is, that you will share it. It is not much that I can offer you dear. Perhaps I should wait. But yet, why should I? If you love me, you will stand bravely by my side, and we will share whatever storms life may have in store for us, as we share its sunshine. Alice, what is your answer? Will you be my wife?"

Ah, it had come at last! Once the girl had tried to check the torrent of his words. He had but caught the little, detaining hand in his own strong palm and held it tightly. The small head had dropped lower. A short, gasping sound was in her throat, letting no word find its way there. What was she to do? Two years ago she had given another promise; two years of toil and homesickness had been endured for her sake; but for six months she had heard nothing. Perhaps John had forgotten her—as ah, as she had almost added, "as she had forgotten him." But of John, Dent Dexter knew nothing, and Dent Dexter she loved. So it was that, when, half wondering at her long silence, he again repeated his question, she simply raised to him the fair face, and content with what he read there, he stooped and pressed his first kiss on the young red lips.

Somebody has said it was bad luck for a bride to don her wedding-dress before the wedding-day. It was all nonsense, Alice thought, as some six weeks later, she stood before her mirror and saw reflected there her own form clad in white silken robes.

Dent had been so impatient for their marriage before the July roses faded on the outside walls of the pretty little cottage he had prepared for her home-nest, that she had been forced to yield to his wishes, and now but few short days would intervene before she would cross its threshold as his wife.

In all these weeks she had told him nothing of John. Somehow she could not gather courage to frame the words. And John had forgotten her. He would never know. It was better that he should not. Love is ever jealous, and he might upbraid her, or think even that while he had won her that she might prove inconstant to him as to her first lover. Some day when she was his very own she would whisper the story into his ear, and they would bury poor John together.

Poor John! She wished she had not thought of him, as she stood in her wedding-dress. The air was very heavy to-night. It was this which oppressed her so.

"Come in," she called, to the knock at her door.

The little maid entered.

"Oh, Miss Alice! law, Miss, how beautiful you do look! The gentleman is down stairs and wants to see you immediately, Miss."

The gentleman! Of course she meant Dent. She had a great mind to run down just as she was, to hear if he would echo the little maid's verdict, and say that he, too, though her very beautiful.

The impulse of vanity was not to be resisted, and gathering up her silken skirts, she ran lightly down the stairway.

to claim her. His voice was hoarse when he spoke.

"I came for my bride," he said. "Is she here? Is this dress for me?"

"Have pity," she wailed, in answer. "Two years were such a long while. For six months I had not heard from you. I thought you were dead or had forgotten me—"

"Men do not forget," he answered. "We leave that to the women who undo us. Six months! And it seemed to you a long time to wait. Child, do you know what I have endured for the reward of this moment? What was hunger, toil, privation, homesickness, to me? I almost welcomed them, for ever behind them was the thought that all were for you, for the day which was slowly creeping on, when I might stand before you and say: 'Alice, I have proved my love with a price. You may accept it, darling, without fear. It has been purified through fire. And when, six months ago, my crowning success came, I started in search of you; but the long hardships had done their work. For months I was at death's door, unable to write or let others write. Then, when I grew stronger I said: 'I will wait until I can go to her.' You were sheltered, cared for, happy. I am as the man who toiled all his life for a glittering diamond, and when at length he picked it up triumphant, discovered it to be a piece of shining glass."

"John, John!" forgave me!" she pleaded, clinging with both hands to his arm, her face upturned in its pale beauty to his. "I loved you then. Believe me, I loved you then."

Through the open window stole her words, paralyzing the form of an unseen listener, who had that moment appeared upon the scene. What did it mean?

He heard not the man's answering words—"Forgive you? Never!"—but saw only his last, mad, mad, passionate embrace as he snatched her unresisting form in his arms, and covered her face with kisses, which seemed half hatred and half love; then released her, and went out into the night.

The next day a little note was put into John Maxwell's hand; and, as he tore it open, the strong man trembled like a child.

He had grown calmer since the night previous, though all the joy and lightness had died out of his life.

"You have had your revenge," she wrote. "The man I was to marry saw you take me in your arms, and heard me say that I had loved you. Perhaps I deserved my punishment, but it is very bitter. You left me two years. If you had loved me you would not have done so. I was a child, and forgot you, and learned to love another. I no longer ask you to forgive me, since you have wreaked upon me your revenge."

His own life stretched bare, and blank, and desolate before him. For a moment he felt a wild joy that so hers might prove. The next, after a brief struggle, his manhood conquered.

His revenge should be something nobler than a girl's wrecked life—something which, after long and lonely years, he might recall without a blush of shame.

Dent Dexter was alone in the cottage he had prepared for his bride, sitting with bowed head, when John Maxwell sought him out. The interview between them was very brief, but as they parted their hands met in a long, silent clasp. One man had given happiness—one had renounced it. So the wedding-day was not postponed, but Alice's fingers trembled as she again fastened her wedding-dress, and tears dimmed her eyes as she bent to fasten the orange blossoms in her breast. She knew that Dent had taken her back to his heart and home, that somehow all had been explained to him; but quite how it all happened she never knew until a year later, her husband bent over her where she lay with her baby-boy sleeping on her breast, and told her all the story, ending with a proud glance at the child. "He gave us our happiness, darling. We will name our boy after the man who wreaked such a noble revenge."

Electricity in the Human Body.

Many people are familiar with the "spark" which may be produced under certain conditions by stroking the fur of a cat; and travelers in Canada and other cold, dry countries have witnessed the still more remarkable phenomenon of the human body being turned into a conductor of electricity, and the possibility of lighting the gas by merely placing one's finger—giving the necessary conditions of electrical excitement—near the gas jet, without any other agency. Mr. A. W. Mitcheson, the African traveler, who is engaged in writing a narrative of his exploring expeditions in Western Central Africa, gives some still more startling facts. He states that one evening, when striking an African native in a moment of anger with a cowhide whip, he was astonished to see sparks produced, and still more surprised to find that the natives themselves were quite accustomed to the phenomenon. He subsequently found that a very light touch, repeated several times, under certain conditions of bodily excitement, and in certain states of the atmosphere, would produce a succession of sparks from the bodies of native men as well as native cattle. A lazy negro, it seems, yielded none of these signs of electricity, a rather fortunate circumstance for his more active brethren, who may come in for a share of undesired flogging from the hands of future travelers in search of electrical phenomena among the human race. We are not aware that these facts have been recorded by other travelers, but they certainly deserve thorough sifting by competent observers.—[London Lancet.

German Coffee Cake.—Two heaping coffee-cups of sugar, four heaping tablespoonfuls of bread, one-half cup of butter and drippings (equal parts of each); mix all well together, and add one large handful of flour; mix well again, and set it aside to rise. When sufficiently raised, roll out about three-fourths of an inch thick and place in buttered tins, and raise again until quite light. Then beat the yolk of an egg with a teaspoonful of milk, and rub it over the top with a brush, and bake. When done, brush again with milk, and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon on the top; or, before baking, brush over it melted butter, and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

The Astors of New York own about 1,100 brown stone front dwellings.