LOVE AND HOUSE-CLEANING.

"Saidee Saidee! Where are you? Why don't you answer me when I call?"

"Yes, Aunt Leah—I am coming in a minute."

"In a minute!" sarcastically repeated the old lady. "It's 'always in a minute' with you, Saidee! But, I suppose, because I'm old and helpless, my comfort is a matter of no consequence whatever."

"Dear Aunt Leah, you must not think that!" answered a bright, cheery voice; and Saidee Lynn came into the room, with a little tray, where was arranged, on a snowy napkin, some tea biscuits, half a dozen pink radishes, a few thin-cut shavings of smoked beef, and a little pot of tea, with a cup and saucer of old blue china, which would have been invaluable to a collector. "You see I had you in my mind all the time, Aunt Leah," she said merrily. "I gathered the radishes from our own garden. Don't they look nice?'

Aunt Leah, a withered little old lady, in a dress of worn black silk, and sharp, gray eyes, peering through gold bound spectacles, tasted of the tea and shook her head.

"It's too weak," she said. "It isn't fit to drink!"

"I put in all the tea there was in the canister, Aunt Leah," said Saidee, with a distressed countenance.

Aunt Leah pushed away the cup with an expression of distaste.

"As I might have expected," said she, "my nieces have too little thought for my comfort to study my poor and few necessities. Never mind the tea; I can drink cold water, I dare say!"

Saidee wrung her hands in despair. How could she tell this weak, feeble old lady above whose declining years hung the threatening Damocles sword of heart disease, of the narrowing circumstances of their empty exchequer, the clamoring creditors, the pitiful straits to which they were reduced.

"What shall I do?" she asked herself, as she went slowly back to the little kitchen of the ruinous Gothic cottage, which they had obtained for a ridiculously low rent because it was ruinous. "I've borrowed of the rector's wife twice and I'm ashamed to go there again, and I've sold everything I can lay my hands on. But," glancing up at a picture which hung in the hall beyond, "there's the Velasquez still. A Velasquez is always worth money. Belle will scold about parting with it, and Aunt Leah will mourn, but we can't live on air like the fairies. I'll take it down to Mr. Bruner, the artist, this afternoon, and ask him to get me a purchaser. Poor people such as we are can't afford to retain family relics."

And so when Aunt Leah was indulging in her afternoon nap, and Belle, the beauty of the family, was ironing out the flounces of her white muslin dress for the morrow's picnic, valiant Saidee climbed on a chair, took the unframed picture down (it was the head of some old Spanish grandee, with a stiff pointed ruffle, and an evil leer in the eyes), wrapped it up in a newspaper and crept across the meadows with it to the village.

Mr. Bruner was in his studio—a grizzled, jolly old gentleman, in a [illegible] and a faded velvet [illegible] hat, and kind [illegible] had taken a few lessons from him; but when she displayed the canvass he shook his head.

"How much do you think it is worth?" asked Saidee wistfully.

"Nothing!" said Mr. Bruner.

"But," cried the girl, "it is a Velasquez!"

"That a Velasquez?" said Mr. Bruner, contemptuously. "My dear, there isn't a picture dealer in the country who would give fifty cents for it. It's a menacious imitation, and a wretched one at that."

So Saidee tied up the poor picture and went home again shedding a few tears as she walked under the whispering trees. "My last hope is gone!" she thought. "But I'll not tell Aunt Leah or Belle that it is an imposture. They have always taken such innocent pride in the Velasquez."

As she came past the old brick house at the foot of the locust lane a load of furniture was being carried in, for it was the second week in May. Wicker chairs twined with blue ribbon, a cottage piano, cases of books, engravings, bird cages, plants—all sorts of pretty things.

Saidee paused and looked at them, not without interest.

"I wonder who our new neighbors are to be?" she thought.

Just then, out trotted a stout, cherry-cheeked old lady, with her cap all one side, and a worsted shawl tied over her shoulders.

"Oh!" said she; "are you the young woman who disappointed us yesterday about cleaning?"

"No," said Saidee, crimsoning to the temples.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" said the old lady, "what is to become of me? All the furniture coming in, and my daughter lame from falling off a step-ladder, and the girl gone, and—But," with an anxious look, "perhaps you can recommend some one to help us settle?"

"I am sorry to say that I cannot," answered Saidee, and she vanished behind the lilac hedge, rather amused at the mistake the old lady had made.

Belle was full of news that evening.

"Oh, Saidee," she cried, "such a nice lady is moving into the Locust House!"

"Yes," said Saidee; "I saw the furniture carts at the door, as I came back from the village this afternoon."

"In the village!" cried Belle, tossing her head. "It's strange, Saidee, that every time you get to run about and amuse yourself, while I am drudging at home there's a young gentleman and the handsomest man, Alice Aikin says, she ever saw—and Mr. Pyle says he and he is to be at the picnic to-morrow. I'm to get acquainted with the belle of the neighborhood. Isn't it delightful?"

"I dunno," said Saidee, indifferently.

While Belle was talking, she had been in a dilemma of mind what to do on the day after the picnic.

But early in the morning, while the flush in the east was still crimsoning the sky, she made Belle lay aside with her hair in orthodox papillotes, Saidee [illegible] and [illegible] little [illegible] at eight o'clock, Aunt [illegible] tapped her cane on the ceiling of her room which was directly beneath the one occupied by her nieces. Belle made her appearance presently, in a faded calico wrapper, rubbing her eyes after a drowsy fashion.

"Where's breakfast?" said Aunt Leah.

"Where's Saidee?' counter-questioned Belle. "Oh, I know the selfish thing! She has got up early, and gone down into the woods to get some pink azalias for her hair before the other girls think of it. She wants to astonish us all at the picnic. But I think she might have told me!"

"I'm afraid Saidee thinks more of herself than she does of us," said Aunt Leah sourly.

And Belle, in a very ill humor, began to prepare the breakfast—a task generally assumed by her elder sister.

While Saidee, hurrying down the path by the swamp, took the short-cut across the clover meadow, and was presently knocking at the door of the brick house where the load of furniture had stood the day before.

The old lady with the crooked cap and the cherry cheeks came to the door.

"Have you yet engaged any one to help you get settled?" said Saidee, blushing very prettily.

"We can't hear of a soul!" said the old lady. Every one is engaged just now, and—"

"If you thought I could be of use," faintly began Saidee.

"Bless me, child!" said the old lady, "you are too slight and small. Besides," looking closer at her, "you are a lady."

"But I know how to clean house for all that," said Saidee, valiantly. "I've done it every year at home. We are ladies, but we are not people of means. It is necessary that I should earn a little money, and—"

"Come in, my dear," said the old lady—"come in and have a cup of coffee with us. I am Mrs. Hartwick—and this is my daughter Kate."

"Saidee Lynn!" exclaimed the soft voice of a pretty young girl, lying with a sprained ankle on the sofa.

To her amusement, our heroine recognized one of her schoolmates, Katherine Hartwick, who had graduated in the same class with her, at boarding school, two years ago.

"But you surely never have to come here to—work?" said Kate in amazement.

"Yes, I have!" said brave Saidee. "Why, is it any less creditable to clean paint and wash windows than to play croquet or do Kensington stitches? And my Aunt Leah has lost all her little property, and we are very, very poor! So now you know all about it. And when I have eaten my breakfast, if Mrs. Hartwick will give me a cleaning cloth and plenty of soft soap, I'll show her what I can do!"

So that Miss Lynn was mounted on a step-ladder, polishing off an antique mirror, when Katie's soft voice was heard, saying:

"Oh, Harry! is that you? We supposed, of course, you were at the picnic. Miss Lynn this is my brother Harry. Harry, let me present you to Saidee Lynn, my dear old schoolmate, who has come here to help us clean house."

Miss Lynn made as graceful a bow as she could, under the circumstances. Mr. Harry Hartwick inclined his head.

"At the picnic, indeed!" he retorted, merrily. "Not at all. I've been hunting for some one to help you, and for my pains my success I have returned to do a little white-washing myself."

"Oh, have you?" said Saidee. "I know such a nice recipe for kalsomine—as white as alabaster, and it won't rub off at all."

"Let's make it," said Mr. Hartwick, promptly.

No picnic could ever have been more delightful than this day among dust, white-wash, scouring-sand and brooms.

Kate, on her sofa, hemmed curtains; Mr. Hartwick bustled to and fro; Saidee, with her curly hair tied up in a handkerchief, secured paint, and Harry whitened ceiling; and at twilight they had three rooms in perfect order.

"We have achieved wonders," said Kate, looking around at the neatly tacked carpets—the soft, garnet plush hangings—the pictures on the walls—the crystal brightness of the windows—while Mrs. Hartwick took Saidee mysteriously on one side.

"My dear," said she, "I do not know how to thank you sufficiently. But I am ashamed to offer you a dollar and a half although—"

"But I shall not be ashamed to take it," said Saidee, smiling. "Why should I? That is, if you really think I have earned it."

"My dear, you have more than earned it," said the old lady; "and if you could possibly come to-morrow—"

"Of course I will come," said Saidee.

Weary as she was, Saidee went around by the village to buy some Young Hyson tea for the old lady before she returned to the Gothic cottage.

"Well," she cried, brightly, to her sister, "what sort of a day did you have at the picnic?"

"Awfully stupid!' yawned Belle. "And the handsome young gentleman from Locust Lane didn't come at all."

"Didn't he?" said Saidee.

"And where have you been?" demanded Belle, in an injured tone.

"Oh, spending the day with a neighbor!" said Saidee, with a laugh.

They finished the house cleaning that week. Mr. Harry Hartwick found it necessary, we may add, to walk home with Saidee the next evening, and he developed a remarkable talent in the amateur painting and kalsomining line, before they got through.

"Isn't she pretty, Harry?" said Kate, when at last they were settled comfortably, and Saidee had gone home for good.

"She is pretty," said Harry, enthusiastically; "and she is brave, and she isn't afraid of honest work; and altogether she is my 'beau ideal' of a girl."

"Mamma," whispered Kate, laughing after her brother had gone out, "I believe our Harry is in love with Saidee Lynn."

"I'm sure I don't blame him," said Mrs. Hartwick. "She is a little jewel."

Aunt Leah never knew where the Young Hyson tea came from, nor the sponge cake, nor the white grapes, nor all the little luxuries which had cheered her of late; nor did she suspect anything until one day Harry Hartwick came to her, and formally asked her for her niece's hand in marriage.

"Well, I never!" said [illegible]

"But how did [illegible] acquainted with [illegible]

tioned Belle, half pleased, half jealous.

"Because I cleaned house for his mother," said Saidee, laughing.

And then, under solemn seal of secrecy, she told Belle all; and Belle declared that it was too romantic for anything, never pausing to think that real life is as full of romance as a summer meadow with buttercups, and that fortune comes to those only who go bravely out to seek fortune.—[Saturday Night.

Ancient Chinese Coffins.

A recent number of the Celestial Empire, referring to a discovery of some ancient graves near Shanghai, gives, says Nature, an interesting account of a Chinese burial in former times. A man of means purchased his coffin when he reached the age of forty. He would then have it painted three times each year, with a species of varnish, mixed with pulverized porcelain—a composition which resembled silicate paint or enamel. The process by which the varnish was made has now been lost to the Chinese. Each coating of this paint was of some thickness, and when dried had a metallic firmness resembling enamel. Frequent coats of this, if the owner lived long enough, caused the coffins to assume the appearance of a sarcophagus, with a foot or more in thickness of this hard, stone-like shell. After death the veins and cavities of the stomach were filled with quicksilver for the purpose of preserving the body. A piece of jade would then be placed in each nostril and ear, and in one hand, while a piece of bar silver would be placed in the other hand. The body thus prepared was placed upon a layer of mercury within the coffin; the latter was sealed, and the whole then consigned to its last resting place. When some of these sarcophagi were opened after the lapse of centuries, the bodies were found in a wonderful state of preservation; but they crumbled to dust on exposure to the air. The writer well observes that the employment of mercury by the Chinese of past Chinese dynasties for the purpose of preserving bodies ought to form an interesting subject for consideration and discussion in connection with the history of embalming and "mummy making."

The Reason Why.

A boy returned from school one day with a report showing that his scholarship had fallen below the usual average.

"Well," said his father, "you have fallen below the average this month, have you?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did it happen?"

"Don't know, sir."

The father knew, if the son did not. He had observed a number of cheap novels scattered about the house, but he had not thought it worth while to say anything until a fitting opportunity should offer itself. A basket of apples stood upon the floor, and he said:

"Empty those apples and take the basket and bring it in half-full of chips. And now," he continued, "put those apples back into the basket."

When half the apples were replaced in the basket, the son said:

"Father, they roll off—I can't put in any more."

"Put them in, I tell you."

"But, father, I can't put them in."

"Put them in? No; of course you can't put them in. Do you expect to fill a basket half-full of chips, and then fill it with apples? You said you didn't know how you fell behind at school, and I will tell you. Your mind is like that basket; it will not hold but about so much; and here you have been the past month filling it up with something worse than chips—worthless, cheap novels."

The boy turned on his heels, and said: "I see the point."

STANDARD MINSTRELS.

A Testimonial to a Deserving Artist.

W. H. Towne, San Francisco Gallery, corner of First and Morrison streets, Portland, Oregon.—We, the undersigned members of the Standard Minstrels and Muldoon Picnic Party, take pleasure in tendering this testimonial to your talent as a first-class photographer. We have had work done by eminent artists in all the leading cities of the United States, but never have we had photographs made that has given us such complete satisfaction as those procured at your gallery. For perfect finish and life-like expression, they excell all others.

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OREGON TO MASSACHUSETTS.

Some time ago Messrs. Hodge, Davis & Co., of this city, read in a Massachusetts paper that Hon. Charles R. Ladd, auditor of that state, was afflicted with an incurable kidney disease, and had been obliged to give up work and return to his home. They immediately sent him a box of their celebrated Oregon Kidney Tea, and from time to time sent him other boxes. A few days ago they received from him the following letter:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Auditor's Dep't, Boston, Nov. 11, 1881.

Messrs. Hodge, Davis & Co.: Dear Sirs—I have no hesitation in saying that I have been much benefited by the use of the Oregon Kidney Tea as a remedy for a kidney difficulty which has troubled me for six or eight years. I can heartily recommend it to those who are similarly afflicted, as a safe and agreeable remedy. I shall test its virtues further, for I have great faith in it as a specific for many diseases of the kidneys. Respectfully yours,

CHAS. R. LADD,

The original of this letter can be seen by calling on Messrs. Hodge, Davis & Co., Portland, Oregon, and the Oregon Kidney Tea can be bought of any druggist or dealer, in Oregon or Washington. Price $1 per box.

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Frank G. Abell, the Portland medal photographer, has remodeled his gallery and largely increased his facilities for doing good work. His large country patronage shows that the people of this county appreciate good work. When you go to Portland call in and see Frank and examine his gallery. An hour cannot be spent any more pleasantly.

Any book in the Seaside or Franklyn Square Library sent on receipt of price by the N. P. News Co., 147½ First street, Portland. Dealers in all kinds of books and stationery.

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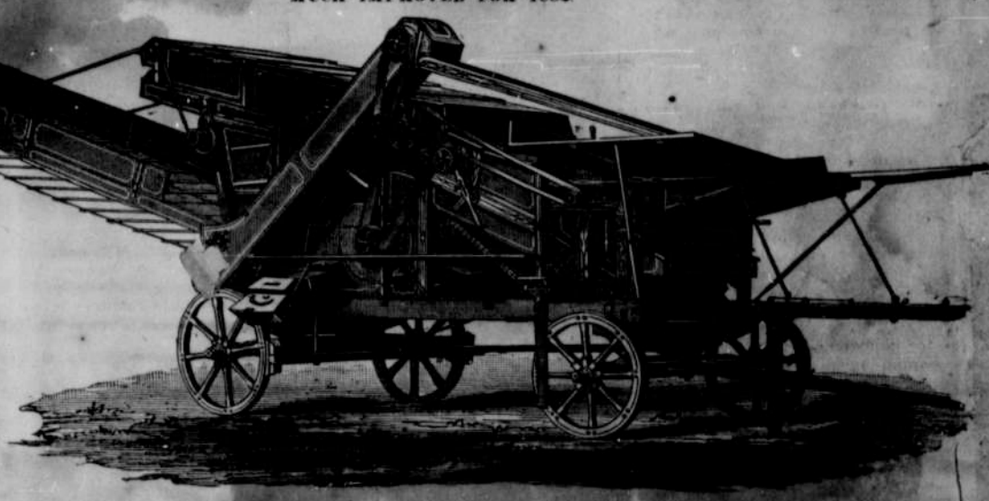

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