

THE FAMILY STORY

IN THE CLUTCHES OF A GRIFFIN.

It was a real relief, when papa's new doctor was gruff and terrifying, to say "bear" all to myself. But, perhaps, I diverted my attention too much from what he was telling me by this device or he scented me into temporary idleness by his grim demeanor. At any rate, I was conscious that as a nurse I had cut a poor figure.

It seemed a special pity that poor papa should have had that illness just then, when mamma and Isabel were in Baltimore. Mamma had gone there to be under the care of Dr. Baker, and she could not come home, and Isabel could not leave her. If we had only had our good old doctor it would have been better, but he was in Europe, and papa had called in this Dr. Griffin, who, people seemed to think, was something wonderful. It was said that his practice was really something phenomenal for so young a man (he was verging on 40; I am sure that is not so very young for any amount of practice, and I suppose he had to economize his forces, but it made him dreadfully disagreeable).

I was sitting by papa's bed when he came in that first day. Some people made such a hero of him that I felt a little curious to see him, anxious and troubled as I was, and I smiled at him as nicely as I could as papa said, "My daughter, doctor"—though he was little less than appalling; extraordinarily tall and gaunt and awkward, with a rugged, serious face and a shock of tawny hair like a lion's mane.

I was about to go, but as he did not glance in my direction he was probably not aware of my intention. He slightly inclined his head and said: "Miss Macon will please go out." Which Miss Macon did with all due celerity.

That was but the beginning of a series of shrinkages that I underwent during this illness of papa's. I am only 5 feet 4 to start with, but every interview with the doctor made me feel a foot or two shorter.

When I looked out of the window one day and actually saw mamma and Isabel getting out of a carriage at the door it was as if a ton weight had been lifted from me. The doctor was with papa (who, however, was almost well), and I was in my own room keeping out of his way. I dashed downstairs like a mad thing and hung my foot somehow or caught my dress on a loose screw (I have never known which), and fell almost from the top of the flight to the bottom. The doctor rushed out of papa's room and was at the foot of the stairs almost as soon as I was. Mamma and Isabel appeared frantically from the opposite direction, papa calling from upstairs all the time to know what it all meant. I was so ashamed of having caused the commotion that I tried to get up hastily and close the incident.

"Oh, it's nothing. I just slipped," I began, struggling to my feet—and then a great, palpitating darkness settled over all. I revived to find myself, as it were, "in the clutches of a griffin." (I had long applied his name to him in a distinctly opprobrious sense.)

"What do you mean by tearing about the house in that fashion?" he demanded, stopping at the door as he was leaving.

But somehow I was not so afraid of him now, and for reply I only laughed freely and manfully from my station on the sofa. It was well that my terror of him had lessened, for that miserable sprained ankle required his attention more or less throughout that winter.

A strange thing happened soon after mamma and Isabel came home. Isabel is very pretty and very bright. We were sitting together after tea when the bell rang, and who should be ushered in but Dr. Griffin. And with his hair cut—which was not at all an improvement—though I had thought that any change would be. It was so wonderful to see him sitting there laughing and talking, "like folks," as Mamma Judy used to say, that I could not do anything but stare at him. And when Fred Carey came in I was positively provoked. But then I never saw Fred quite so stupid and uninteresting.

Not very long after that another remarkable thing happened. The first wonderful thing, by the way, began to happen pretty frequently after a while. I think I have a little knack of rhyming, and one day a magazine—a real magazine—took one of my pieces. Such a thing had never happened before and has never happened since. It was a sentimental little effusion, which was not about anything or anybody in particular, but it seemed to me to be pretty, and it sounded as if it meant a good deal.

I was standing on the porch when I opened the letter which the postman had just handed to me. I remember it

was a beautiful spring morning, when my cup of happiness was running over anyway, and this last drop was almost too much. I was about to fly into the house, as fast as my disabled ankle would allow, when I heard the click of the gate. I waved my letter to Dr. Griffin as he came up the walk, and he smiled at my absurdly radiant face. It was almost worth while to be so grim looking, to be so transformed by a smile, I thought to myself. I did not wait for greetings or questions.

"I have got a piece accepted by the magazine!" I said, eagerly.

"Ah, that's good!" he replied. "And what are you scribbling about?"

"Oh, it's just lovely!" I said. "Don't you want me to say it to you?"

"Go ahead, and don't jumble it," he replied, dropping down upon one of the seats on the porch.

I clasped my hands behind me and rattled off my piece, flushing a little as I did it from suppressed laughter at my own audacity. And then I looked at him for applause. There was a blank silence, and my eyes sank and cheeks grew hot with mortification.

"Humph!" he said at last, getting up from his seat. "Well, how is that article of yours?"

It seemed my fate always to be seen by Dr. Griffin at a disadvantage—from the time when he just saved me from murdering papa with the wrong medicine on through various misadventures almost to the present day and I have hated him afresh every time, as if it were all his fault. Some people always see one at her best—he appeared on the scene invariably when one was least desirous of spectators.

I started out with rather a sinking heart not long after the adventure of the poem—which incident, by the way, had rankled not a little in my mind—to hunt up a Sunday school pupil who had dropped off, after an attendance of a Sunday or two upon my class. He was said to live on a small street which I had never heard of, in a remote and not especially genteel part of the city, which I had never explored, and I foresaw that I should get lost. I stopped on my way at the house of another pupil of mine, whom I knew to be ill, and whom I had been visiting for some time.

His mother received me in a cold, stuffy little parlor, and entertained me while Johnnie was being made ready for company. I listened sympathetically to a long narrative of the heartless treatment she had received from her physician, who really did seem to have neglected his poor little patient, and to have been rude and overbearing besides. I had passed him once as I went in, and had noticed how red and bloated his face was, and had thought then that he was drunk. He was a physician, I suppose, of no standing. I had never before heard his name.

"And then," she concluded, "I just phoned for Dr. Griffin. My husband said, 'Don't you be bothering Dr. Griffin; he's got more'n he can do 'tending to the rich people.' But he's got time to 'tend to poor people, too, as well I knew. And I phoned and he came. An' he's an angel in a sick room!"

The comparison struck me as so ludicrous that a smile arose to my face before I could check it.

"If I was Queen Victoria and Johnnie was the queen's son he couldn't be kinder. Now, you can just walk right in and see how pert Johnnie's bettin'."

After leaving there I walked on, and on, as the story books say, and it really did seem that I had embarked upon one of the vague, nightmarish quests of the Norse tales. The end of my journey seemed always just at hand, and still it lengthened, lengthened, till I could fancy that I was a love-lorn princess looking for the Castle of the Clouds. If Bonaparte Plunkett had lived east of the sun and west of the moon, or at any other of the addresses given in those veracious histories, he could not, it seemed to me, have been more tantalizingly inaccessible. He took on, at last, a half-mythical character in my mind, as I could find no trace of him.

Hens and chickens ran squawking across my path; geese hissed at me, to my unspeakable discomposure; puddles of ill-smelling water appeared on the mean sidewalks; dirty women and children swarmed about the doors, and still Bonaparte Plunkett's place of residence ever receded from me. I began to have a distinctly disreputable feeling, as if I were becoming assimilated to my squalid environments, and a faint fear arose within me as I realized that I had not the slightest idea in the world of where I was. Yes, I was lost. I stood still and looked blankly around me, beginning, as the last

screw, to feel that my ankle was giving out. I was just making up my mind to ask the way to the nearest car line of the next person whom I should meet, when I saw a baggy coming down the street. A sudden hope took possession of me. He always came when I was in some undignified and rattlesome plight. And—yes!

"Oh, Dr. Griffin!" I called out.

He pulled up at that quavering cry, and looked at me for a moment in the blankest amazement.

"And what are you doing in Rock-ets, miss?" he demanded, as he helped me in.

A wild wave of exhilaration had come over me when I felt myself safe in the vehicle.

"I was only paying some calls," I said in an off-hand way. "Aren't the claims of society burdensome? I am really tired."

"Calls!" he repeated. "And where were you calling in Rock-ets?"

"I was going to the Plunketts," I said. "But never mind—it isn't their day anyway."

I began to repent my nonsense when he took a little red notebook out of his pocket, and, utterly ignoring my presence, began to look over it with knitted brows. We drove on in perfect silence for several blocks, and he manifested no intention of resuming the conversation at all, while I, on my part, was occupied in regretting that I had totally forgotten that I was "on my dignity," as my old nurse would say.

"Well, Miss Frances," he said suddenly, without looking up, "have you forgiven me?"

"Forgiven you, for what?" I questioningly replied, but a reminiscent wave of mortification swept over me.

He gave a short laugh, still turning the leaves of his book, but did not answer.

As he sat looking down, with his brow furrowed and his rugged face showing every hard line at its hardest in the clear daylight, I stole timid glances at him and wondered how I had ever had the temerity to rectify those miserable, sentimental verses of mine to him, of all men! I blushed hotly as I thought of my folly.

The horse had slackened his pace, but the doctor did not seem to notice it.

"Have you been writing any more poetry?" he asked, as if becoming conscious of the claims of civility.

"No," I said stiffly.

He made no pretense of interest in my answer. Indeed, he was quite evidently not at all attending to what I said. "I didn't like that—what's its name?—sonnet of yours," he remarked, tapping the horse with the reins.

"Ah," I said, as if I had not already been crushed by the snubbing which it had received.

"Do you want to know why I didn't like it?" he went on. He put his book down and looked at me with a queer smile.

"Yes," I said, but still with the laughlessness born of inward humiliation.

He took off his hat and looked carefully into the crown, frowning as if he had that moment remembered leaving something of the highest value which seemed to be missing. And then he put it on again. He cleared his throat and jerked at the reins.

"I didn't like to think of your whimpering about some whippersnapper," he said, "when I want you myself."

When the trees and houses had settled back into their normal places and the waterfall had ceased rushing and roaring in my ears I looked at him and saw that he was talking on, but of what he said I had only the vaguest notion. The blankness of my face must have struck him at last, for he stopped abruptly.

"Wait, don't say anything yet," he said.

We were drawing near to my own home, but the horse went very slowly.

"If you could tell me," he began—there was something positively uncanny and awful to me in the humility of his tone—"but don't say anything unless it is 'yes.' Take time—any length of time."

Time! It seemed to me that it had been 1,000 years already. It was such an old, old fact that Dr. Griffin had asked me to marry him that I felt that I had been born with the consciousness of it. I tried to remember how things were before it happened, but no, there was nothing before that.

Neither spoke as he helped me out of the buggy and solemnly walked with me up the long green yard. He paused at the porch.

"If," he said, "you could possibly say 'yes'—don't make me wait."

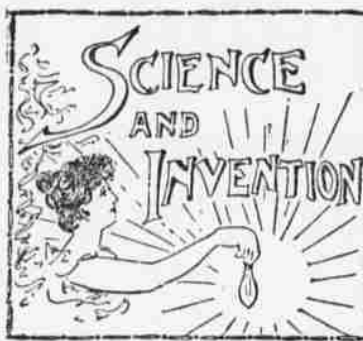
I ran up the steps without replying, and opened the door, stopping with my hand upon the knob, and looking back at him standing upon the walk below.

"Yes," I said, and, banging the door, I flew upstairs to my own room.

Then I peeped at him through the shutters and I saw that he had bowed his head on his hat for a moment, as if he were in church.

What a ridiculous couple we will be! —Ladies' Home Journal.

Meat, according to experienced cooks, should never be washed. It may be cleaned by rubbing it with wet cloth. Meats lose flavor if placed in direct contact with ice.



Fatal Measles and Mumps.

It is reported that a terrible epidemic of measles and mumps is raging in Costa Rica. One writer says that as many as ten thousand children died of these diseases in a period of three weeks. The government suppresses the facts. It is well known that measles is a much more dangerous disease in countries where it has never been known than in Europe and America. It probably becomes milder by being filtered through the bodies of successive generations. When measles first gained a foothold in Fiji it was as virulent and as fatal as cholera.

Brain and Mind.

Great size of head and brain is indicative of extraordinary mental power only when "other things are equal," that is to say, when the quality of brain is fine and the vital functions generally are of a superior order. Proportion to the size and weight of the entire body is also to be taken into account. An illustration of the fact that the size of the head is not a direct and envying measure of intellectual greatness is suggested by the remark in a recent biography of Louis Agassiz that while Cuvier and Agassiz both possessed "enormous heads and largely developed brains, neither Lamarck nor Darwin was abnormal as regards the size and development of the head."

A Big Chunk of Silver.

In a popular history of America published many years ago an account is given of the discovery of a silver mine in Peru by an Indian, who, while chasing game in the mountains, seized a shrub for support, and the shrub, coming loose in his hands, revealed glittering masses of silver clinging to its roots. This story is recalled by the recent discovery in Pinal County, Arizona, of a nugget of native silver which had been washed and worn by water no one knows how long, but which still weighs 448 troy ounces. It is of an oval form, and its surface is so marked as to indicate that it consists of crystals of silver formed in strings, and afterward compacted into a mass. The nugget has been placed in the National Museum in Washington.

Size of an Earthquake Wave.

Seismologists say that every great earthquake causes pulsations which extend for thousands of miles in all directions on the globe, and Prof. Milne likens such pulsations to the long, low swells that sweep across the ocean. Recently Prof. Charles Davison has attempted to measure the height and length of the waves of an earthquake that occurred in Greece on April 27, 1894, the pulsations of which were perceived by the aid of a specially constructed pendulum at Birmingham in England. The pulsations, or waves, passed through the rocky crust of the earth with a velocity of about two miles a second, and each of the largest of them, according to Prof. Davison, must have been about twenty-eight miles in length, but only half an inch in height!

The Earth's Animals.

A recent computation places the entire number of species of animals which up to the present time have been described by naturalists at 360,000. Many new species are added every year as previously unexplored lands are invaded by students eager to gain distinction by adding valuable contributions to the lists of science. The number of species already known is so great that even naturalists are sometimes troubled to keep track of them, and a project has just been set on foot in Germany to publish a work in which the entire animal population of the globe shall be arranged and described on a uniform system. The publication is to be begun next year, and a quarter of a century is assigned as the probable period needed for its completion. Not only German, but English, French and American naturalists will have a hand in the work.

The Science of Yeasts.

A translation into English of the work of the great German authority on fermentation, Prof. E. C. Hansen, calls attention to the important services which science has recently rendered to the brewers of the "Fatherland." About ten years ago Prof. Hansen experienced much difficulty and opposition in obtaining admission to the Old Carlsberg brewery for the purpose of carrying on researches into the origin and nature of the yeasts on which the production of beer depends. The brewers were practically familiar with the culture of yeast, and did not believe that a scientific professor could tell them anything new or useful about the subject, although the yeast often behaved in a manner which they could not explain and which caused them

much disappointment and loss. Within a few years the professor discovered facts they had never dreamed of, had taught them a better system of cultivating yeast, and had made their brewery famous throughout the scientific world, on account of his experiments. Various kinds of "disease" in beer, and Hansen has discovered the means of guarding against it. He has also devised methods of preserving "stock" yeast so that it can be kept pure for years, and transported safely thousands of miles.

Selecting a Vocation.

"The young man who says, 'I have given my heart to the Lord, and, therefore, I am going to study for the ministry,' misses the entire point," says Dr. Parkhurst in an article on "Selecting a Career," in the Ladies' Home Journal. "There is no 'therefore' about it. That is a pettifoggish way of making a great situation. I quote from a letter that I received recently from a young lawyer in Ohio: 'In my daily life about the criminal courts I have seen many a sad scene, and at last it has come to that point that I am almost added to cast aside my bright future law, and enter the service of the Lord.' I answered him that he was wasting his time. What he meant by 'the service of the Lord' was the Christian ministry, and that is no more a service of the Lord than any other reputable calling. It is not what a man does that makes his service Christian; it is putting his career under contribution to the public weal, instead of mortgaging it to his own preferment, that makes his service Christian. There is a great lot of small thinking about these matters and well meaning imbecility that works damagingly all around. My respondent furthermore wrote that he had 'learned to distrust the law,' of the more reason, then, why he should stay in the law. We cannot improve anything by standing off and 'distrusting' it, but by jumping in and converting it. If all the consecration is put into the ministry and all the brains into the other professions neither the pulpit nor the world will profit. The sum and substance of all of which is that while a young man has come out on to the distinct Christian ground of putting himself under contribution to the public weal, the selection of a career, best suited to himself and to the needs of humanity, is simply a matter of studying adaptations, and deciding by what trade, business or profession he can subserve that weal the best."

Pharaoh the Oppressor.

The worst blot on his character was his ruthless destruction of the works of his predecessors. No doubt, in some time of distress, it would be difficult to supply workmen for public monuments, but his utter disregard for everything that went before him outdoes even his orgulous father, and is painfully in contrast to the careful restoration made by his artistic grandfather, Seti I. He planted his funeral temple just behind the magnificent building of Amenhotep III., and proceeded to smash up every portable stone, whether statue or tablet, to throw in for his own foundation, and then reared his walls with the rubble blocks of the great temple, and even stole the very bricks. Not content with taking what he wanted, he further defaced what he could not use, and all over Egypt the statues of the kings may be seen with his name roughly cut over their inscriptions, or battered with a hammer on the exquisitely polished surfaces of the other monarchs. With little of scruples, of taste or of feeling, he was yet not devoid of ability and energy for a difficult position; and though we may not rank him with a Trajan, a Belshazzar, or an Atreus, yet it would be hard to deny him the company of a Vespasian or a Claudius Gothicus, a George the Second, or a Victor Emmanuel—Century.

A Poet's Gifts to His Little Friends.

As we all know, Mr. Field was very gentle and tender to the little ones. They were in any way weak or afflicted they appealed all the more strongly to the love of which his heart was so full. His nature was as simple as a child's, and he loved the children's toys as much as they did. His sympathetic enjoyment of their pleasure in any new toy was a revelation to the everyday man or woman. One day I went with him into a toy store to get some little things for the babies, as he rarely was home empty-handed. After he had purchased several things, he ordered a dozen medium-sized bisque dolls. I wondered what he was going to do with many, and put the question to him. He answered: "Oh, I like to have them, and when little girls come to see me I can give them a dolly to take home." Some time after his death, the family found the box that had contained the dolls. There was only one left, and that one in some way had been broken. It was only a few weeks before his life ended that he bought these dolls, so he must have had many visits from his little friends.—St. Nicholas.

If your men folks strew the woodcoats and boots all over the woodshed, have a closet made by putting up two boards on either side and hanging a print curtain—and plenty of nails and a shelf at the top to hold newspapers after reading.

Every bad married woman that ever lived had an indulgent husband.