

A SNOW FANCY.

The yellow girded things of June
Whose beam is like a dull bassoon,
Sweet bees they have on swaying beds
When are unspoked the clover heads—
Those bursting globes of purple fire.
The fuzzy coats upon each spire
Of blossoms perch, to search the rim
Least it with honey overbrim.

But unlike these the wild, white bees
That swarm upon the leafless trees,
For our dull ears they have no song,
They do not to the earth belong.
No stirring of the soft white wing
Was ever heard or fluttering.
Although the darkened air they crowd,
Their happy hive is in the cloud,
And they for the sky children there
In unseen pastures of the air
Distill the dew. O happy bees
That swarm among the winter trees.
—Annie Bronson King in Century.

THE ONE THAT FOLLOWED

Two men, John and David, walked side by side along a dusty road. They were returning from the great town in the valley to their homes in the hamlet hanging high above them against the mountain.

As they walked they chatted of the sights in the town, of the good wives and little ones to whom they were coming after three days' absence; joking, joyous, happy in remembrance of their town jollity and in the anticipation of their welcome home. Occasionally they stopped under the overhanging branches of an orchard and ate apples, or they kneeled by a spring, making a cup of their hands to drink from; then passed on again.

The sun struck down fiercely upon their backs and shimmered on the dust of the road.

"Ah, the heat! Let us go more slowly, John."

"No," replied the other. "It will be cooler higher up. Let us make haste and reach the shade of the woods, and beyond there will be a breeze blowing."

Suddenly, as they walked, David felt that they were not alone, and turning his head saw a third person following a few paces behind them, an extremely tall man, wrapped in a black cloak. As David turned the man's eyes looked into his with a steady, unflinching gaze. The black robed figure was only a short distance behind him, walking with a long, even stride, without sound, his cloak drawn up to his ears, covering his mouth and chin.

As David looked he shivered; then, turning his head quickly, he walked rapidly on, urging his companion to hasten.

"But just now you were calling to me to go slower, and now you want to hurry."

"Yes, let us hurry—the heat!" And they passed on, the ardent sun beating on their backs.

As they went forward David turned over in his thoughts the strange sight he had seen behind them, that was behind them now, he felt certain, though not daring to look again, a shiver coursing the length of his spine at the thought of the muffled figure in that fierce heat. And John, had he also seen it? Did he know what came swiftly, without sound, at their heels? He looked cautiously from the corner of his eye at his friend without turning his head even slightly. John plodded on, his eyes on the ground and his big shoes white with the dust, grumbling at the heat, his face dull and expressionless.

At length they reached the cooler air where the road climbed between the arching trees of the forest, and John halted to rest in the shadow. He was older than his friend and tired more easily.

"Now," thought David, "he will look back and see." And he watched the other's face narrowly.

They sat on the edge of the road, their legs hanging down the bank. John's gaze wandered back, down the long stretch over which they had come, and David waited.

But the old man only looked out from the shadow with a half smile of satisfaction that so much of the long journey was over, his simple countenance placid with the thought. "How white the road is!" he said.

"And not many travelers on it," said David, in half question, still looking earnestly at his comrade's face.

"Not a creature in sight," answered John quietly. "We have the road to ourselves. Others are not such fools to come out in this sun!"

David, reassured by this, turned slowly and looked back. Just below, by the first tree, in full view, silent, motionless, stood the tall figure, a little nearer than before.

David leaped to his feet and ran along the steep road, stumbling, terrified. John saw nothing, and this creature so close, in plain view. "Hurry, hurry!" he called back, and ran on.

"What has come to you? Are you crazy?" cried the old man. "One can't pause to rest, but you jump and run!"

"I—I am not well. I want to get home," panted David. "We have yet far to go. We must not waste time resting."

"You are sick. Yes, you are pale; your teeth chatter. We will stop at old Andrew's and get you something. It is this scorching day!"

"Yes, yes; you will stop at Old Andrew's. He will cure me. It is not far, only beyond the next turn, where the trees end."

"And we can take the short way home from there, the path from the back of his house, up 'The Rocks.'"

Again they walked rapidly onward, the old man full of concern for his friend, the young man looking straight ahead.

At the border of the forest the small brown house stood on the edge of Old Andrew's scanty farmland, the poor, half barren land of these mountain farms. Beyond the few fields that stretched up gradually from the back of the house rose abruptly "The Rocks," a high cliff, reaching far along the side of the mountain, sheer, forbidding, its bald face crossed by a rough, narrow pathway. By using this steep way the journey to the cluster of houses above the cliff was made much shorter than by following the gradual, winding ascent of the road.

The two friends turned in at old Andrew's little gate. At the door they were met by the farmer's wife, her sleeves rolled up to the elbows.

"Ah! John Martin and Dave! Back from the fair? Come in."

"Yes, Mary, on the way home. Where is Andrew? David here had a turn on the road coming along below, and we want Andrew to mix him something. The sun was too strong for him, I think."

"Yes, yes, Andrew! Andrew!" She raised her voice and called into the house over her shoulder. "Come in, both of you. He is somewhere about. It is cool in the house at the shady side, and Dave can lie down there."

David cast one brief glance backward as he followed the others into the house. In the road just beyond the gate, and looking over it, stood the one that followed.

Old Andrew was held in high esteem among the mountain people as half doctor, half wizard, with his knowledge of the use of roots and herbs. He brewed a muddy, pungent tea which David drank, and Mary, the wife, placed extra plates at the table and insisted on the travelers taking supper.

"Let David rest," she said, "and if he is better after supper you can go home in the evening by the short cut. There will be a moon; or he may stay the night if not strong enough to go home."

So it was arranged. Old Andrew and John talked together of the simple, worn subjects of their rude lives—the poverty of the soil, the long season without rain, the many hardships that befall the farmer.

The wife plied David with questions about the town. "Was there a big crowd at the fair? And the weather—was it fine every day? Did you see the cows from the Duncan farm?" and so on. David answered absently, thinking of the waiting stranger outside the gate.

When the twilight fell the young man felt able to go on, and was anxious to reach his family, so the two men set out along the path through the rocky fields. As they reached the base of "The Rocks" and began the steep ascent the moon rose.

John led the way, stepping cautiously, calling back to the other to avoid the uncertain footholds.

But David, climbing after, thought of nothing but the somber shape that had waited outside and had followed close across the fields after them, and which he felt climbed up and up behind him, step by step.

There was no sound, except when at intervals a loose stone rolled down, dislodged by their feet. The night was beautiful, the broad face of the cliff shone in the moonlight. Here and there along the edge of the path, where there was danger, rude railings had been placed to protect the traveler; these were silvered by the moon. At some places a rock jutting out cast below it a dense shadow amid the surrounding whiteness.

As they climbed, David tried to force himself to turn and face the man in the black cloak, and question him, his name, his mission, why he followed, gaining steadily, step by step, but he lacked courage. Once he had met that cold, steady gaze; he could not brave it again. He watched his comrade climb above him slowly. Slowly he climbed after, and, glancing down, saw the edge of the black cloak blown upward against his legs.

He stopped and put his hands over his eyes. "Who are you?" he said in a low, broken voice. "Why do you follow, pressing nearer and nearer?"

And a voice answered at his ear, while the folds of the cloak, blown upward, flapped about him, "You shall know my name when you are at the end of your journey."

"No, now!" whispered David hoarsely. "Now, your name?"

"Further on!" came the voice. "When you reach the next railing."

And they climbed on again in the moonlight. John had gone round a turn of the path out of sight. David advanced feebly, rising laboriously from step to step, pausing often. He could feel the other pressing up behind him, ever nearer.

When they reached the railing above David stopped, with his hand upon it. "Now, your name?"

"Do you not know?"

The moonlight fell with tender beauty over the broad valley below, upon the white road, upon the forest trees, upon the small brown house at the foot of the cliff. The black cloak floated about his head, before his eyes, coming between them and the fair picture. A hand fell upon his, grasping the railing.

"Your name—your name!"

David's hand closed firmly on the wooden rail, and he leaned heavily against it for support; an arm closed round him.

"I am so near—so near. Do you not know?"

There was a sharp sound of breaking wood as the rotten timber parted in two, and David fell outward, his struggling feet scraping along the rock. As he fell the folds of black swept round him, his arm embraced him more closely and they went down together. And David knew that the one that followed was Death.—Charles Edward Kinkead in Pittsburg Bulletin.

A Perplexing Situation.

"Hello, Willie," said a small boy as he met a comrade in the street about dusk, "yer mother's lookin' fer ye."

"Is she?"

"Yes, she's got the whole family out and she's goin' on terrible. She says you were the pride of her heart and was goin' to be the comfort of her old age."

"Go 'way; she didn't!"

"Honest. She says she never did see one so smart fer yer age nor such a comfort around the house. You'd better go on home."

"I was hurryin' with all my might. But are you sure she said all them things?"

"Yes, fer ye a lot more. Go on, she's waitin' fer ye now."

"Well, I don't know. I tell ye, Jimmy, I'm mighty doubtful in my mind about whether I hadn't better stay lost."—Washington Post.

"THE HOUR OF SUNSET."

A Revolutionary Belle Which Barely Escaped the Refuse Pile.

There was a new picture in the National museum of Independence hall—come, as it were, to be seen by strangers from far off lands—and there were faces there to see it that had only recently come to the shores of America. The picture of itself, its simple cardboard, little more than a square foot in size, its somber print, making a curious reflection upon its true meaning, seemed of no intrinsic value. It had held a place betimes among the cherished relics of a colonial estate; had been cast among strangers, to be finally rescued from the rubbish of an auction house to find final rest in the hall of all halls.

It is "The Hour of Sunset" on the Fourth of July, 1776. The members of the old Continental congress, having signed the Declaration, are seen in the act of leaving the hall. Hancock, distinguished by his dark dress, stands on the steps in front of the hall door, announcing to a friend that the Declaration has just been signed. Franklin is seen at his right, Jefferson leans against the right pillar of the door. Adams is conversing with Jefferson. Between their heads appears the face of Livingston and against the left pillar stands Roger Sherman. These form the group on the steps.

Beginning then on the left of the picture, and counting every figure with numerals as a guide, may be discovered, first, a citizen of the day with the familiar Revolutionary costume; then Wilson, a signer; next a citizen, and in the order given, a Tory, another signer, a young woman and presumably her father, the Indian who bore the Declaration to the carriage of Washington. Thomas Paine, talking with Benjamin Rush and Robert Morris, both of whom were signers. Behind the heads of citizens are seen, and to the right is a crowd of patriots, Quakers, Tories, etc., eagerly discussing the nature and merits of the Declaration.

For about three years the picture, which bears the imprint of "Groome & Brightly," was in the possession of John A. Keell, a well preserved man of more than sixty years, who has lived in the quaint two story and slant house, with its snow white trimmings, for more than a third of a century. He was formerly with M. Thomas' Sons, auctioneers, where he lost many valuable relics in works of art by the fire which destroyed that firm's South street house, and laterly has been in the employ of Ellis & Shaw. It was during a sale by this firm of an old estate on Arch street, where "The Hour of Sunset" was offered and would not bring a song, that he himself withdrew it at the best bid made.

Then it lay in the office of the Chestnut street store until that house was closed, and all the rubbish being cleared out Mr. Keell remembered the ancient print and saved it from the ash barrel. He took it to the National museum, where he thought it rightfully belonged, as all his inquiries have failed to discover one like it, and there in the antique case on the west side of the room it may be found in an obscure corner.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Curious German Legends.

It is a belief among the German children that hares lay the Easter eggs, and the country children go to the woods shortly before Easter and gather moss, grass and twigs and form them into nests, which they mark with their names, and then skillfully hide these behind the bushes in the garden or under the large chairs or sofas in the library or sitting room. On Easter morning they go and see what the hare has brought. No one knows exactly why the hare has been associated with Easter, though there are many pretty legends giving reasons, which are as fully believed by the little German people as the stories of the good Kris Kringle. The only difference is that one comes at the Christmas tide, the other at the Easter festival. Both are surrounded with mystery, but both are alike welcome, and are laughed about and talked about many times before the happy days come again.—Emma J. Gray in Good Housekeeping.

Nature's True Tonic.

One of the advantages of light gymnastics is that the sick and convalescent can make what appear to be trifling efforts, and by them in time be restored to active health. If too feeble to be practically able to make but little exertion, try what are known as deep breathing movements. Lie flat upon the back, take as long and as deep breaths as possible, and while the mouth is closed slowly throw the arms up in front and then at the sides. Rest for ten minutes. Try again the same inhalation and exhalation of air, the latter being pure and fresh. After a while attempt the same sitting up. These exercises can safely be taken by the sick one every day several times, and the whole muscular system will be improved, just as if some revivifying tonic had been given, a far better one than any charged with alcohol or some like stimulant.—Ladies' Home Journal.

The Way the Farmer Took It.

We are indebted to the clergy for some odd blunders. A country clergyman on a certain occasion chose for his text a passage from the Scriptures which had been variously interpreted, and on concluding his sermon he said, "These are the conclusions I have reached after the most diligent study, but I must inform you that the commentators disagree with me." He was somewhat astonished the next day to receive a big bag of potatoes with the following note: "Reverend and dear sir: You told me this mornin' as how common taters didn't agree with you. I hope as how choice kidneys does."—Providence Journal.

The Last Desperate Resource.

Mother—Painting, music, singing; you have learned everything, and haven't got a husband yet. We must next try paper flower making and wood carving, and if that is no use, you will have to learn cooking.—Der Ulk.

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