

Current Literature.

THE KING'S SHIPS.

God hath so many ships upon the sea! His are the merchantmen that carry treasure...

Meadow Farm.

Mary Miller came home from the factory upon that April evening, with a light, quick step. The sky was all a jonquil glow; the frogs were croaking in the swamps...

isn't that cheerful? And isn't it nice our old rag-carpet should chance to fit this floor so exactly? with a satisfied, downward glance.

Mrs. Miller uttered a little shriek and grasped her daughter's arm at this moment. Mary stopped short, with an ashy pallor overspreading her cheek.

For as she spoke, the door opposite had opened, and a very little old woman, silver haired and shriveled like a mummy, came in, and walking across the floor seated herself in Mrs. Dabney's very corner.

"That Mrs. Daniel Dabney and Mrs. Eivorad Elberston let their old aunt go to the poorhouse?" said Mary Miller.

"What shall we do?" said Mrs. Miller, in accents of perplexity. "A crazy woman here—it don't seem just right, Molly, does it?"

"I'll take her back after she has rested a little, and had a cup of tea," said Mary cheerfully.

"But perhaps she won't go." "Oh, yes, she will," said Mary. "Poor Miss Abby! She is as gentle as a child."

"Home," was scarcely the ideal realization of that poetic word to our factory girl. She and her mother lived in the upper half of a shabby, unpainted wooden house...

"The first violets always bring good luck with them," she whispered to herself as she pinned them into the bosom of her blue flannel dress.

"I hope I don't inconvenience anybody," she said meekly. "But that woman at Tewks town has cut off my allowance of snuff, and after all, there's no place like home."

"It ain't such a very large house, mother!" pleaded Mary, as she laid the bunch of violets in her mother's lap.

"It isn't a month now since old Mrs. Dabney died," said Mary. "And they say that her daughter in the city and her son in California despise the old farm, with its one-story house and its old red barn."

"But my dear—"

"She shall sleep in her own room, out of the kitchen," persisted Mary. "She will be no more care than a canary bird. Oh, mother, do consent! She will think then that she is in her own old home. Oh if you knew how dreary it is at that poorhouse, with the grass all trampled out, and piles of clam shells laying around the door, and not so much as a dandelion or a daisy to be seen."

"Do as you please, my child," said she.

The Tewks town authorities were but too glad to be rid of the poor old incubus; and Miss Abby Dabney settled down in her old home, as contentedly and unquestioningly as if she had never left it.

"The Widow Miller and her darter must be rich folks to undertake to support old Miss Abby," sneered one neighbor.

"She was well enough provided for at the poor house," said another.

"There'll be the biggest kind of a smash-up presently," observed number four, "and an auction sale of every thing;

and I'll be on hand—for I don't deny that them little Alderney cows is the cunningest creatures I ever set eyes on, and good milkers into the bargain.

But time wore on, and there was no flutter of a red flag over the porch. On the contrary matters thrived, and Mary Miller declared joyously, that "farming was a great deal more profitable business than working in the factory, and only wished that she had found it out before."

Until one gray autumnal evening, Mary and her mother came back from a brisk walk to the village, and found a stalwart, sun-browned man sitting opposite to Miss Abby, by the red glow of the fire.

"Ladies, I beg your pardon?" he said. "But s'posed when I came here I was coming home! I knew nothing of all these changes. I never could have dreamed my cousins would let this creature go to the town poor-house."

"It's cold, ladies," she said, looking around with a disparting air. "Cold for the season of the year. And they don't keep fires at Tewks town!"

"Mother," said Mary, recovering herself with a hysterical grasp of relief. "It isn't old Mrs. Dabney's ghost at all. It's old Miss Abby come back from the Tewks town poorhouse."

"You don't mean—" began the mild widow.

"Ladies, I beg your pardon?" he said. "But s'posed when I came here I was coming home! I knew nothing of all these changes. I never could have dreamed my cousins would let this creature go to the town poor-house."

"I'll take her back after she has rested a little, and had a cup of tea," said Mary cheerfully.

"I have heard of Cyrus Dabney," said Mrs. Miller gently.

"And I'll venture, ma'am, you heard no good of me," said the young giant, with a short laugh. "I'll not deny that I was a wild boy enough, but there wasn't any actual evil in me, let folks say what they would. And now I've come back a rich man, and there's nobody to bid me welcome home, except old aunt Abby, out of the poor-house."

He could not long have made this statement, however.

All the town was up to bid the rich government contractor welcome to Tewks town within twenty-four hours. But Cyrus cared little for the friendly overtures of the old neighbors.

And Abby was the only person for whom he seemed to care, and his greatest grief was that the old woman refused to leave the old Dabney farm-house to live in the stately brick mansion which he built on Prospect Hill.

Friends. She never knew that it was anything else, until one day old Aunt Abby took a strange idea into her head. And Mary, holding a rich Oriental cord for Cyrus to loop into knots for picture frames, heard her introduce Mrs. Miller to a neighbor as "my guest, Mrs. Miller, the mother of the young lady that nephew Cyrus is going to marry."

Cyrus looked at Mary. Mary dropped the ball of cord and turned crimson.

Mary!" he said piteously, "say that it shall be so. For I love you! And—and you were good to old Aunt Abby when all the world turned against her. I sometimes think Mary, that you must be like one of heaven's angels!"

They still live in the old farm house, the happiest of married lovers, and Aunt Abby firmly believes that they are all here guests; for to her the world stands eternally still—the world that was so full of bloom and beauty to Cyrus and Mary!—Helen Forrest Graves.

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