

MIS' BUMPUS AND THE SUNFLOWERS.

My nephew, Walter Haight, a young student, who was really in need of recuperating air, and relaxation from severe mental labor, with myself, Helena Warburton, a plain, quiet spinster of thirty-five, were most delightfully situated in a plain farm house. Just where this old, quaint and brown homestead stood I shall not tell, so, kind reader, locate it east, west, north or south, just as your fancy leads you.

Our hostess, a tall, spare woman full of nervous force and vim, gave us the best of clean and well-ventilated apartments. Three times daily we luxuriated in homely country dainties, and feasted our eyes on old-fashioned blue china, yellow mugs, and bright, rose wreathed "cups and saucers," as Miss Bumpus called them.

October found us yet in our comfortable quarters, with little excuse for tarrying; the bright eyes, the red and brown in Walter's cheek, and springing step, would not permit that young gentleman to claim the petting and privileges that belong to invalidism, but we were loth to leave.

Our landlady, Miss Polly Bumpus, "a tall, spare woman full of vim and vigor," as she expressed it. Her gude man had slept the sleep that knows no waking for many years, and his "relict" lived out her intention of "arising at sun up, and rearing a trifle after sunset, her own mistress." To hear Miss Polly boast of her freedom and independence, one would imagine the late Elanah had begun a domestic tyrant; but after a short sojourn with her I began to think Miss Bumpus was, and had ever been, the ruling spirit.

She wore a bright yellow cotton dress, of home manufacture; her hair, almost matching in color, was twisted tightly upon the summit of her head. A copper-hued sunbonnet, made stiff with pasteboard, shaded the thin, dark face and snappy black eyes, from morn until night, as Miss Bumpus seldom removed her sunbonnet, even when she sat at the table with us.

We were very quiet, almost oppressively so, as few visitors came to the farmhouse; but I had, to wait upon Walter and myself, a bright, intelligent, colored girl of fourteen, who came certain days in the week. Clorinda told me much of a fashionable young lady that had spent the summer near us.

"Oh, Miss Helena, she is jess lovely! All dived with satins and jewels that shine."

On the afternoon of a perfect day—the air was soft and warm, but not oppressive—Walter, with a bundle of papers and letters, just received from home, out to his favorite tree, while I seated myself comfortably in a great old-fashioned arm-chair that surely must have been the property of some ancient relative of Miss Polly, as this confidence of energy could never have had any use for such an encouragement of laziness.

I had only to raise my eyes from "One Summer," and see through the east window a scene of peace rest and beauty. Trees clothed in crimson, yellow and brown, lovely little rivulets, and small cascades dignified by the name of "Glen Falls" a minute Niagara. The soft tinkling of sheep and cow bells, a little way off, were musical. I closed my eyes, and recalled all the poetry and prose I had ever read upon bells. A line of an old song rang through my head:

"Bells bells, oh, beautiful bells!
Loud over the vale, a soft over the sea,
Oh, could I but hear you once more!"

Through the west window a different and busy scene presented itself. The little city of Edgewood, with its bustle, was not far off.

Clorinda came in with a bunch of white, yellow and pink chrysanthemums.

"What am I for your hair, Miss Helena? They would look fine, I think."

The faithful creature looked disappointed when I bade her arrange them in a china saucer, and place them near by.

"Oh, Miss Helena, you're so plain! Now Rhoda's young lady does look for looking nice. Rhoda is proud to wait upon her!"

Just then Miss Loring's stylish phaeton and handsome pony stopped before Miss Bumpus' front gate. It was with some confidence I looked at my dress—a plain, dark wrapper. Clorinda summoned me downstairs, where Miss Loring waited in grand toilette, if Clorinda's statement was to be credited.

"Come, Aunt Helena, your visitor awaits."

And my nephew entered my room, and offered me his arm with a great flourish of polite attention.

"Miss Kathleen has the aesthetic and literary craze in the most violent form. You will be quite overpowered."

Miss Kathleen cooed out her admiration of the setting, coarse blossoms, while Miss Polly looked on amazed.

"Yes," said the practical possessor of the objects of the aesthetic maiden's admiration, "I planted last spring a good handful of seeds; you see this corner always has been wet and good for nothing. I learned such places were good for raising sunflowers; it keeps off the ague. Ever have chills, ma'am? Then the seeds are good for asthma, besides being elegant food for the fowls."

I'm main glad I planted them here, but I never could abide their smell, and see no beauty in 'em."

This was too much for Walter's gravity. He came near devouring his handkerchief, then suddenly left us.

"Poor, dear young man, said Miss Bumpus. 'He is getting sick again; that cough is coming back; now maybe if I'd parch and grind these seeds, bile it into a strong bitter tea, it would help him.'"

Miss Kathleen's look of horror and disgust at good Miss Polly's ignorance of Osear Wilde, the value of aesthetic and beautiful quality of the sunflower, the beaming and innocent expression of Miss Bumpus' countenance, while she imparted valuable information concerning the utility of the gaudy blossom to the dairy maiden, who had never learned, the desire to know, of practical life, and the common-place events in prosaic lives, was almost more than I could look upon without laughing outright. Miss Loring said it in my eyes, I fear.

"Oh, yes," gasped Miss Kathleen. "I dare say it would relieve Mr. Haight's cough, but it would make the decoction very, very strong; will you please tell him that I said for you to do so?"

And with anger shining in her blue eyes she summoned her maid, Rhoda, from her gossip with Clorinda, and bade me a cool adieu.

It was a penitent Walter I found in my room.

"O Auntie," he began.

"Stop, Walter Haight!" said I, trying to rebuke him, when I had been almost as rude myself. "You may pack your trunk to-night, as I have to go to-morrow."

"Aunt Helena, I know I behaved badly to-night, but I had her queer mixing of authors! Then when she called our bonny Jean Ingelow 'Mr.' I could not help laughing. And when Miss Polly went on about the 'sunflowers' I could not help myself. Three cheers for Miss Bumpus, if she isn't aesthetic! and the saucy boy cheered so loudly that it brought her to the door."

"Has Mr. Walter got a bad spell? I have the best of him now; it will soon be ready for him."

"Yes, Miss Polly," said I, "and make it extra strong; you will remember Miss Loring said for you to do so."

"Much obliged to Miss Kathleen for her advice; I'm going to persuade Miss Polly not to give it to me."

Whether he succeeded or not I never knew, but it is likely he did, as Miss Bumpus and he were firm friends.

[Waverly Magazine.]

The Laureates of the Seine.

Women kneel in the boats on the banks of the Seine, pounding their linen with the wooden battoir, scrubbing it with a stiff brush on rigid board, while they sing as merrily as larks, and reply to the bawling of the passing barge and canter. They turn the handle of the wringing machines and do all the hard labor, while the men are busy ironing. The man in the blue cotton trousers and snowy white shirt, with the scarlet girdle round his waist, can iron as well as any Chinaman. He can boast of having among his colleagues men who coffer a frill, or "bring up" the pattern of lace better than any emigrant from the Celestial Empire. The iron, flat and box, are pushed deftly to and fro over the white linen, which has been starched, and the man who wields them has a bit of the wax in his pocket like the chalk of the billiard player which he passes over the hot iron when he comes to the front, the collar or the wristbands. He has learned the rudiments of his art when, a soldier in the barracks, he was compelled to do his own washing and ironing, and he works by the piece, earning his living, and glowering angrily when his profits are menaced by the threat of tinkering the mangle as yet almost unknown on this side of the channel. The blanchisseur goes into Paris on the Monday morning with the clean linen, and the ironers, who have been working overtime on the Sunday and on the two preceding days, take a rest. They may be found on the Monday afternoon at one or other of the concerts at Pont du Jour, enjoying themselves as best they can with the firm intention of not resuming their occupation until the Wednesday. Sometimes their employers can not secure their services until the Friday, but, as a general rule, they prefer to wait, for they are ungallant enough to maintain that it is far better and more profitable to employ men than women.

Shutting up Children.

The London Lancet relates a distressing case of suicide of a boy 10 years old, who had been shut up in a room as a punishment. The editor comments adversely on leaving children or young persons and the weakly or troubled in mind alone: "The solitary state is abhorrent to the nature and mind of man. Whether the brain be immature in its development, or whether, as it is, it is wrong in a scientific sense—that is, opposed to the laws and teachings of physiological science—to leave it alone. The possibility—we will even concede the probability—of a subsistence of excitement is not a sufficient self-off against the dangers of a self-destructive intellect. The mind always works to its own injury when it works alone. Reflection, introspection and self-examination are essentially abnormal processes. The proper action of mind is on the outer world, or on such conceptions of fact and object as may be readily conveyed by present observation or experience. Abstract processes of thought are never safe for the young or the weakly and troubled in mind. Healthy activity, so far as these two conditions of mind are concerned, is directly relative. It is not good for man to be alone in any way. We should therefore again protest against the recourse to solitary confinement as a punishment for children, and against 'seclusion' in any form for the unsound of mind. The two methods of treatment stand on the same footing, and they are both equally bad."

A Plucky Naval Apprentice.

"You are a plucky little fellow." These words were spoken on board the flagship Portsmouth of the training fleet on the occasion of the distribution of medals to the boy. The speaker was Admiral Porter, and the person addressed was Apprentice Krepps of the first class. The circumstances that brought about the compliment from such a distinguished source were as follows: Some seven or eight days ago, while the Portsmouth was still far out of sight of land, bound home from Europe, a number of apprentices were sent aloft to take in some canvas. There was a pretty stiff breeze blowing and the vessel rolled heavily. After the sails had been taken in the boys were in the act of obeying the call to come down, when the vessel gave a sudden lurch, and over went young Krepps into the sea. The cry, "Boy overboard!" was immediately heard, and orders were given for a boat to put out to the rescue. Krepps was repeatedly lost to view while the vessel was heaving to, although it was seen that he was making a brave struggle for life. He made for the stern of the vessel, and got hold of some chains that were hanging there. These he clung to like grim death, and then called out to the men in the boat, "I guess there's no danger; am here at the stern." Blood streaming from his eye, which had been cut in falling. It was for his great pluck that he was specially noticed by the Admiral, who took occasion to make the remark when handing him the Admiral Bailey medal of gold, given annually to the apprentice who is most proficient in gunnery. The boy is under fourteen years of age, and is small for his class. Apprentice McKigney, of the first class, got the Farragut prize for seamanship, and Apprentice McFadden got a medal for second position in gunnery.

How a Girl May Always Look Neat.

"When I was a girl there was one of my young friends who was distinguished for 'making her things last.' Her dress, gloves and ribbons were a marvel of durability. I used to wonder how she managed to make them last so without their looking shabby, but I ceased to do so after I had visited her at her own home. The reason why her clothes were so long was she took good care of them. Her dresses were brushed and folded carefully away, and the slightest spot on them was removed as soon as it was discovered. Her hat was wrapped in an old pocket-handkerchief, and put away in a box as soon as done with, the strings and laces being brushed and folded out most systematically each time. Her gloves were never folded together, but were pulled out straight and laid flat in a box, one upon another, each time they were used, the thinnest hole being mended before she put them on to show itself. But the thing that impressed me most was the care she bestowed upon her ribbons. When making up bows she used to line the under part of the ribbon with white paper, and this not only prevented the ribbon from becoming limp and creased, but kept it clean, so that when the bow was soiled on one side she could turn the ribbon, and the part that had been covered came out looking fresh and new. That girl married and brought up a large family. Her husband had to fight his way, and did so bravely and successfully, for he became wealthy. But his prosperity was due quite as much to his wife's care and economy in saving money as was his in making it."

A House Blown to Pieces.

Mrs. Byron Topham of No. 4742 Paul street, Frankford, had tried by numerous devices to destroy the bugs in her furniture, but her efforts, up to yesterday, were unsuccessful. At last she bought two gallons of benzine, and yesterday morning she began by saturating her parlor furniture with her whole stock of the liquid. Her mother, Mrs. Heff, who is seventy years old and an invalid, was sitting in the next room. Mrs. Topham kept the door between the two rooms closed, on account of the odor from the benzine. By the time she had finished her distribution of the liquid among the furniture, Mrs. Topham, feeling faint and dizzy from the effects of the vapor in the closed room, opened the door and stepped into the dining-room, when the benzine vapor rushed out of the open parlor door and part of the side wall of the house shattered by the explosion, fell to the ground. The house was a six-roomed, three-story brick, with alleys between it and adjoining houses. The three front rooms are all wrecked, nothing but the roof remaining up.

NOTICE.

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Explained at foot of this column.

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