

A DAY.

Surprise fresh, and the delectable meal. Stir the lawn with their starling fair. But the blossoms of moon shall be slowly and tall.

CLOCK-WORK.

"My! no!" said Mrs. Poysett, laughing at the very idea; "we ain't afraid to stay in the house one night 'bout men-folks. Are we Lindy?"

"Well, I don't blame you, for you feels of you could sleep—only two women-folks," said the caller, white-featured Miss Haines, with prominent elbows and emphatically clean-cut features.

"Yes, Mrs. Poysett went on, accompanying the slicing of apples for pies with the regular swing of her rocking chair, while she now and then placed a particularly thin and inviting piece of the fruit in her mouth; "that's what I thought. Ten—leven—Lindy, when you go into the other room I wish you would strike the clock round. It strikes one too many."

"Yes'm," said brik Lindy; and then, trying to extricate the recipe for composition cake from inevitable dreams about her wedding day, she forgot the clock—and made an incident for this story.

"Your presents air handsome, Lindy; there's no mistake about that," said the visitor, turning the conversation skillfully to the quarter toward which the town interest was just then tending.

"No more'n you deserve," said Miss Haines oracularly and with an emphasis that left no room for denial. "Polks say to me: John Willey be getting steady to go out west and make a home, 'n then come back 'n marry the girl he's been with ever since they was children."

"I don't know what I shall do without Lindy," said the mother irreverently, putting down the knife to wipe away a turtive tear with her apron. "I'm sure I don't."

"Linda was at her side in an instant with a tear of her own, and the two women kissed, laughed and went on with their work, as they had done a hundred times within the space of a moment. Poysett had the same temperamental fit that sometimes accompanies roundly of form and a double chin, and Linda, besides being sensible, could not keep miserable very long at a time. Thus you perceive that circumstances were rendering it as easy as possible for them to weather the gale of the coming separation.

"And mine's Job Whettles. Queer name, ain't it? Don't believe there's another like it in the country. Good day, ma'am. If I'm round this way again I'll look in on you."

"Thought you's twenty-five miles away afore this," said Pete plying his iron. "Take a seat."

"Seems a pity—don't it?—that things can't be equally divided, so that you and I could have our share," said the stranger puffing industriously at his pipe, but not forgetting to watch the tinker.

"Where Whettles stayed at night was a mystery. Sometimes Pete suspected he might have slept in a barn, he turned up so lonesome in the morning; often he guessed that Toppin, the saloonkeeper, had given him a lodging, from the fumes that lingered about his shabby person.

"You take Poysett's," said Whettles; "you know the lay of the land there, and the same night I'll try Turner's, over on the hill. We'll meet somewhere about 1, down there under the big elm, and divide. After that I'll make tracks across lots and take a train somewhere. No body'll think of you."

"Man alive!" said Whettles impatiently. "I'm afraid at your time of life? Well, here's what I'll do: they go to bed early, you can have it over by midnight. Now, I'll come back that way, and if you're there and afraid to stay, I'll go in and do it myself. But mind, I don't expect you're going to back out. If I have to do all the work I get all the pay."

"I mean to do it fast enough," said Pete, doggedly. "Things can't be much worse off than they are now."

"And if I ain't there by twelve you'll know something has happened and I can't come, so you'll have to go on your own hook. But be sure you are at the big elm by 11."

"That night Mrs. Poysett and Linda had an early tea, and having done the in-door work, and sat down for one of those quiet talks that was so precious because they were soon to cease. The journey to Illinois was so long, and Linda's beginning a new life such a serious matter, that it seemed the two would never have done talking over it. Henry, the nearest neighbor's boy, had shut up the barn long ago, the milk had been strained, and the pigs were washed.

"Eight! Well, I declare!" said the good lady, the clock struck after she had groped her way up stairs. "And it's right, too, for Lindy put it round this morning. Seems to me it took you a good while," she went on, as Linda came in with the lamp. "I don't believe but you went thro' some extra fastenin' up, now, we're alone."

"Not a bit, mother," said Linda, with a smile cut short by a yawn. "I stopped to put the cat out."

"I always think of what your father said," mused the old lady. "It was after the Hamstead murder. We never had our doors fastened in the world till then; and soon as the news of that some every body was scared to death, and your father put a button on the back door. And the first night he turned it, he laid awhile a-thinkin' and he says, 'If there is one wadded bit between me and death, I guess I'll trust in the Lord and not the button.' He stepped in and had turned the button back. What a lot of hair you've got, Lindy, and how quick you braided it!"

"When Pete crept up to the house at 10, the women had been soundly asleep for two hours. He tried the kitchen window; it was fastened and went up noiselessly. He stepped in and was trembling. The clock in the next room ticked with appalling loudness. His knees smote together, but it required as much courage to flee as to remain. Perhaps for ten minutes—perhaps hours, judging by his own exaggerated reckoning—he stood there, his heart thumping and his hands cold, as if he had no reference to him, his courage crawled back and his heart beats fainter.

"He crept toward the sitting room door on his hands and knees. There stood a desk, with its high spindle legs, half of it cast in shadow and half thrown into light by a shaft from the moon. Probably the key was in the lock. He had seen Frank bring in a fat roll of bills after selling his oxen, though in there and put down the cover without turning the key. There had been no robbery in the barn, and the people trusted more in human nature and less in wood and steel. But the sitting room was so light! He never should dare to go in there; the very thought of having his shadow thrown on the wall, distorted like those of the tables and chairs, gave him a chill, and a cold spasm of fear. What if there were only women in the house? He was not a thief by nature or training. He would crouch down in a corner and wait for Whettles to come. He had been there ages, when the clock with an alarming whir, struck twelve. He had been there ages, when the impulse of gratitude that he had not shrieked. When had the hour struck? It seemed incredible that he must have slept, but it must have been so or, what was probable, he had been too much absorbed to hear it. It was time for Whettles to come. He had seen the window and waited in the cold draft of air. Minutes passed, each seeming ten. He began to grow angry. Did the fellow mean to play him false and not come at all? As anger arose, his courage to do the deed ebbed. I do not know how conscience asserted itself very strongly. Life was harder than it had been one day before, and there was no four in the house now. He was still bitterly at odds with life, but the after-effects of the whisky Whettles had given him were nervousness and irresolution.

"The clock gave warning for another hour. False, friendly old clock, if he could have seen your face he would have known it lacked ten minutes of midnight then; instead, he believed it would strike one. Too late for Whettles. Perhaps he was now at the old elm; he would hurry there and bring him back to do his share of the work of the night. He would be blind him and hurried off to the rendezvous. There was no one there. At that moment the relief of having been prevented from sin overbalanced every other feeling. Something must have happened to Whettles; perhaps he had been caught. He had been waiting for his accomplice was waiting for him under the elm. He started on a swift run for home, to find his wife watching for him in the moonlight.

"She was too thankful at finding him sober to worry at the lateness of his coming. Being a woman of tact she did not question, but went to sleep, while Pete lay till daybreak in a cold bath of fear, expecting a rap and summons to jail at every tapping of bough or snapping of frost-bitten nail.

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one could look into Mrs. Poysett's clear eyes for a moment, or hear Linda's clear laugh, with even a lingering fear that either had anything to conceal. When they described the clock's maddeningly inclined to think Pete was as near being faint with surprise as ever man was in his life, and I think he touched the worn old clock case reverently, thanking it for keeping his deeds honest, however he had sinned in thought. He stayed to dinner, and Mrs. Poysett put up a pair of goodies for the children. On his way home he heard the news. Whettles had been arrested and taken away on an early train. Again he walked in fear and trembling; his hair grew used to standing on end in those days. He expected an interview with Nemesis concerning his intended crime, but, whether justly or unjustly, Nemesis stayed away.

The wedding? It was a very quiet one, and the happy pair went away next morning, followed by blessings and old shoes. Frank had such an extravagantly good time in Boston, that he felt he could not counterbalance it by plunging into work of any kind. The girl's mother and Tinker Pete to chop there every day till spring—Alice Deering, in Lippinott.

A Wild Girl of the Mountains. On the northern slope of South mountain, in Mt. Hood township, Lebanon county, Pa., lives a family, among whom is a girl resembling a wild woman and who is kept more like a wild beast than a human being. The family consists of but three persons, the father, son, and the girl in question. They occupy an isolated cabin, which is nearly ready to tumble down. The girl's mother died when she was a child and the poor creature has had no one to train her. Her mind has always been weak and she was neglected entirely in every way. She has not been inside a school-room in her life; she can not read or write. She is very shy and retiring, and she sees a person approaching her she disappears in the bushes and rocks on the mountain. In the spring, it is said, her father compels her to go out on the hill with a flock of turkeys, which she has so neglected to care for that she has become almost wild. She follows her through the thickets and woods from morning until night. Kind neighbors have, through times attempted to catch the girl when she was out with the turkeys and care for her, but all to no purpose. She runs at the sight of a person and disappears, with the exception of her head, which she wears hanging down over her forehead. The household affairs of the wretched family are said to be very primitive, there being but one bed in the house. Stories of a most outrageous character have been circulated about this family. It is stated by good authority that a number of times the call attention of the proper officials to this family and have the matter remedied.—Philadelphia Times.

An Insurance Carpenter. The other day, during a case in the police court, a witness was put upon stand, who gave his occupation as that of a carpenter.

"Where is your shop?" asked a lawyer. "Hav'n't any," urbanely responded the witness.

"Well, you see, I don't need one. I'm an insurance carpenter."

"What's that?" "Well, I'm employed by the insurance companies to estimate damages to buildings. You see, it works this way: A building owner has a fire for a few rooms; or, say, the roof caves in. The company sends me as an expert, and I look around, measure with this tape-line, and do a lot of figuring on a shingle with a big red pencil. Then I say I can repair the damage for \$8.70, or something like that."

"And how does it work?" "Oh! first rate. The house owner says he'll attend to the repairs himself. He sends in a bill for three or four hundred dollars. The company shows my estimate, and rather than bring suit the man takes one-half, on which I get my percentage, don't you see?" and the expert smiled benevolently.

"And so you never saw a board in your life?" said the judge. "No; nor drove a nail," grinned the witness. "But I tell you, gentlemen, the companies couldn't get on without me."

The "Whitens" theatrical company, that is now playing with so much success in Portland, will make an interior tour playing as follows: June 4, New Tacoma; 5-6, Seattle; 7-8-9, Victoria; 10, Port Townsend; 11, Port Gamble; 12, Port Blakely; 13, Vancouver; 14, Dalles; Pendleton; 15-16, Walla Walla; 17, Dayton; 18-19, Wainwright; 20, Dalles; 21, Oregon City; 22, Salem; 23, Eugene; 24, Corvallis; 25, Independence; 26, McLinnville; 27, McLinnville; 28, McLinnville; 29, McLinnville; 30, McLinnville; 31, McLinnville.

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