

The Dream of Life.

"Twas but a bubble—yet 'twas bright,
And gayly danced along the stream
Of life's wild torrent in the light
Of sunbeams sparkling—like a dream
Of Heaven's own bliss for loveliness—
For fleetness like a passing thought;
And ever of such dreams as these
The tissue of my life is wrought.
For I have dreamed of pleasure when
The sun of young existence smiled
Upon my wayward path, and then
Her promised sweets my heart beguiled,
But when I came those sweets to sip,
They turned to gall upon my lip.

And I have dreamed of friendship, too;
For friendship, I had thought, was made,
To be man's solace in the shade,
And glad him in the light; and so
I fondly thought to find a friend
Whose soul with mine would sweetly blend.

And as two placid streams unite
And roll their waters in one bright
And tranquil current to the sea,
So might our happy spirits be
Borne onward to eternity;
But he betrayed me, and with pain
I woke—to sleep and dream again.

And then I dreamed of Love and all
The clustered visions of the past
Seemed airy nothings to that last
Bright dream. It threw a magical
Enchantment o'er existence—cast
A glory on my path so bright
I seemed to breathe and feel its light:
But now that blissful dream is o'er,
And I have waked to dream no more.

Beyond the farthest glimmering star
That twinkles in the arch above,
There is a world of truth and love
Which earth's vile passions never mar,
Oh, could I snatch the eagle's plumes,
And soar to that bright world away
Which God's own holy light illumines
With glories of eternal day!
How gladly every lingering tie
That binds me down to earth I'd sever,
And leave for that blest home on high,
This hollow-hearted world forever.

—G. D. PRENTICE.

Other Fellows Think So Too.

There's just one thing a man can have
In all this world of woe and strife,
That makes the business not too bad,
And that one thing's an easy wife.
Dost fancy that I love my girl
For rosy cheeks or raven hair?
She holds my heart because she laughs—
Because she laughs, and doesn't care.

I put my boots just where it suits,
And find them where I put them, too;
That is a thing you must allow,
A chap can very seldom do.
I leave my papers on my desk:
—She never dusts them in a heap,
Nor takes to light the kitchen stove,
The very one I want to keep.

On winter nights my cozy dame
Will warm her toes before the fire;
She never scolds about the lamp,
Or wants the wick a trifle higher.
On Sundays she is not so fine
But what her ruffles I can hug;
I light my pipe just where I please,
And spill the ashes on the rug.

The bed is never filled with "shams"
A thing some women vilely plan
To worry servants half to death,
And spoil the temper of a man.
She lets me sleep to any hour,
Nor raises any horrid din
If it just happens, now and then,
To be quite late when I come in.

I tell you, Jack, if you would wed,
Just get a girl who lets things run;
She'll keep her temper like a lamb,
And help you on to lots of fun.
Don't look for money, style, or show,
Or blushing beauty, ripe or rare;
Just take the one who laughs at fate—
Who laughs, and shows she doesn't care.

You think, perhaps, our household ways
Are just perchance a little mixed;
Oh, when they get too horrid bad,
We stir about and get them fixed.
What compensation has a man
Who earns his bread by sweat of brow,
If home is made a battle-ground,
And life one long, eternal row?

—Harper's Magazine.

"'Tis wetty watching, wave by wave,
And yet the tide heaves onward;
We climb like corals, grave by grave,
Yet pave a path that's sunward;
We're beaten back in many a fray,
But never strength we borrow,
And where the vanguard camps to-day
The rear shall rest to-morrow."

—"What is often called indolence,"
says Henry Crabb Robinson, "is in fact
the unconscious consciousness of incapacity."

Uncle Bent's Great Boulder.

BY J. T. THORNBURGH.

"Good-morning, Uncle Bent! I've come over to see if you can give me a job."

Uncle Bent stood looking at a huge boulder in a field beside his house. He was something of a boulder himself; well-rounded, massy, hard, with a jaw as set and firm as if it had been modelled out of the granite hills.

He turned and looked at his nephew, and a grim smile flickered like April sunshine over the compact gray visage.

Wallace Bent was as little-like his uncle as a boy of the same name and race could well be. There was nothing of the boulder about him. He was small and rather delicate, yet with a certain decision and strength in his plain, honest face.

He saw the slightly derisive smile, and was conscious of looking very puny indeed in the eyes of his stern relative. He blushed, and aware that such evidence of weakness would not tend at all to raise him in the old man's estimation, blushed redder still.

"Want a job, do you? I declare!" said Uncle Bent. "What do you think you can do?"

"I should think there might be a good many things about your place, or your mill, or your store, that I might do," Wallace replied, with awkward diffidence. "Anyway, mother said I ought to apply to you before going to any one else. I've got to do something now, you know; I'm not going to let her support me, now I can support myself."

"Yes, I thought both of you ought to come to that conclusion long ago," said the old man. "A poor boy like you ought to have been put to earning his living sooner."

"I suppose so," Wallace assented. "But mother wanted to keep me in school as long as possible."

"You're a pretty good scholar, I hear," said Uncle Bent; "but what good will that ever do ye? You haven't the means to go through college and take a profession."

"That's true; but I believe a little education will be good for me, whatever I do for a living," said Wallace, with a firm and intelligent look, quite forgetting his blushes. "That may be a mistake. But I am ready to go to work now. And I thought I would please mother by calling on you."

Uncle Bent was greatly annoyed, for he said to himself, "If I hire a nephew, and a poor widow's only son I shall have to favor him, and pay him wages, or folks will talk. Boys that work for me must be tough! I don't want anything to do with him!"

Then he said aloud, "But you are kind o' weakly! You aint stubborn enough to take hold and do real work! You always have been puny!"

It was Wallace's turn to smile. "You blame me for not having gone to work before; and now you say I'm not able to work."

Uncle Bent wasn't pleased to be convicted of inconsistency in this easy off-hand way by a school-boy nephew.

"There may be some things you can do," he said; but my work is man's work. I have man's work enough, if you could do that."

"I am sure I can do something at it, and I don't expect more pay than I can earn."

Uncle Bent was afraid he had already said too much. "I shall have the family on my hands if I give him the least encouragement; that's what the widow wants," thought he. So he hastened to reply to the boys last remark.

"Here's a man's job, right here. I want to build a barn; and I've been wondering how I should get rid of this boulder. If you want to tackle that, you can!"

As the rock was large, and Wallace looked quite small beside it, the old man smiled again at the grotesqueness of the proposal.

"Very well," Wallace replied, "I'll take hold if you'll pay me by the week."

"No, no!" cried Uncle Bent, growing good-natured over what he considered a capital joke. "Take it by the job, and then you can be as long as you please about it. Lift a little in the forenoon, sit down in the shadow of it and eat your dinner, then lift a little more in the afternoon."

"What shall I do with it when I take it away?" Wallace asked.

"I don't care; only get it off from my place."

"And what do you propose to give for the job?"

"Ten dollars," said the old man, promptly, for he had already calculated that it would cost much more than that to drill the rock and break it up with blasting powder.

"I'll think about it," said Wallace, after a little hesitation.

Uncle Bent laughs. But there was something in the boy's face he didn't understand.

"He can't be in earnest," he said to himself, and he thought it wise to add "I'll give you six weeks to do it in; say, till the first of June."

"All right," said the boy. Meanwhile, isn't there some other little job you'd like to have me try my hand at? There's all that brush back there which the woodchoppers have left; wouldn't you like to have me take that away?"

"Yes."

"What will you give me?"

"Nothing!" said the old man shortly.

"That isn't very large pay," the boy replied.

"I know it," said his uncle. "The brush can be burnt right where it is and the ashes are worth something on the land. Besides, some of the large limbs will cut up into good wood."

"Well," Wallace replied, after a little meditation, "I'll take the boulder, uncle; and I'll burn the brush-heaps on your land, and leave you the ashes. You shall give me ten dollars for the rocks, and what wood I choose to cut out of the brush. Is that fair?"

"Well, fair enough," the old man was obliged to say. "But if you are in earnest, I must say you are a blamed fool!"

"That's my lookout," laughed Wallace, starting to walk towards the brush-heaps.

"And see here!" cried his uncle, "you are not to damage the trees, or endanger the corded wood, by your fires."

"Of course not," consented Wallace, without looking back.

"He talks that way just to carry out the joke," thought Uncle Bent. "He don't act like it, though. See here!" he again called out, "I suppose you know there's only one way of moving this rock?"

"You suggested lifting," said Wallace, smiling over his shoulder.

"It will take a quantity of powder and a good many days' work," said the old man, anxious to get at the boy's real intentions.

"I haven't any money to buy powder, or to hire men; so I shall have to try other means," Wallace replied.

"Do you mean it?" cried his uncle, growing astonished.

"I'm going to try," said Wallace.

"But what—how—are you going to manage?"

"I can't say until I have studied into the matter a little." And again, Wallace walked on towards the woods.

Uncle Bent also went off, irritated and puzzled. He was really inclined to set the boy down for a fool; and he was confirmed in his opinion, on coming out again after dinner, and finding what Wallace had been doing.

He had got another boy to help him; a tall, gawky fellow, whom Uncle Bent recognized as simple Jack—one of those weak-minded youths who are to be found in almost any village. He was dragging brush from the land and placing it in piles near

the boulder.

"Go'n' to have some fun," he said, when the old man asked him what he was about.

"What sort of fun?" Uncle Bent inquired.

"Go'n' to make a big fire, and burn up the rock," replied Simple Jack.

"Burn up the rock!" growled the old man, with angry impatience. "That nephew of mine is certainly a fool, and he has taken another fool in company!"

He walked off towards the woods, where he saw Wallace disentangling the brush-heaps.

The boy looked up from his work, wiped his brow under his old hat-brim, and turned a red and sweaty face towards his uncle.

"So, you're going to burn up the boulder, are you?" cried the old man, with somewhat savage sarcasm.

"That's bright idee!"

"I didn't say I was going to burn it up," Wallace replied, embarrassed and nettled.

"Simple Jack says so."

"Simple Jack isn't the boss of this job."

Wallace gave a pull at a large branch; and then added in a rather dry, drawing tone, "But I won't dispute what he says. I've been thinking about that boulder, a good deal, uncle. I can't tell you what I'm going to do, for I'm not sure my experiment will succeed."

"Well, mabby you know what you're about, but I doubt it." And with a scowl and a puzzled expression, the old man went off to his mill.

He thought a great deal, that afternoon about boulders, his brother's poor widow and his nephew Wallace, Simple Jack and the problem of using fire to remove rocks. He finally became so worked up by his thoughts that he left his business at an early hour and went home.

His mind was not at all relieved to find that the boys had actually built a raging fire of brush against a broad side of the rock.

Nor, I must say, was Wallace at all pleased to see his uncle approaching. The critical moment in his experiment had arrived; and although he felt reasonably certain of success, the old man's presence made him nervous.

But then he reflected, it would be pleasant to have him there to witness his triumph.

Wallace was adding bits of dry brush to the fire immediately beside the rock, while Simple Jack was bringing water from Uncle Ben's well and filling tubs.

"What's the water for?" the old man demanded of the tall, awkward youth.

"To put on the rock when it burns too fast," replied Simple Jack, lugging his pails. "Go'n' to have great fun!"

"So you're rely trying the fire!" cried Uncle Bent, approaching the scene of the experiment. "I don't see that the boulder has burnt up much yet!"

"No not yet. It is getting pretty hot though, and we have plenty more brush, you see," replied Wallace.

"It will be some time before you need the water if it is to put the rock out when it burns too fast, as Jack says," observed the sarcastic old man.

"Jack don't get things quite right, though I've tried to explain them to him," replied Wallace. "We shall need the water pretty soon, I think. That will do Jack! Now stand by that tub, and do just as I tell you."

There was a tub on each side of the fire, which was now rapidly dying away. Instead of replenishing the fire, Wallace hauled what was left of it quickly away from the rock with an iron rake.

"Now dash on!" he cried; and set the example of throwing water from one of the tubs upon the heated face of the porous rock.

Jack hurred water from the other tub. It was cold water from the

well. As it struck the boulder, it hissed and steamed furiously.

Uncle Bent stepped back, to avoid being splattered. He had hardly stationed himself at a safe distance when he was startled by a succession of sharp reports. Crack—crack—crack—crack!

"I van!" he cried, "the boulder is flying to pieces!"

Crack—crack—again. Then after a little while, the reports grew dull, and ceased. But in the meanwhile, flakes and masses of the rock had broken away and fallen; some light fragments flying across the fire, and lighting at his feet.

"Stop now!" cried Wallace. "Save the water, and put on the brush again!"

He shoved what was left of the fire back against the rock, and in a short time, there was another brave blaze.

"I declare, nephew," said Uncle Bent (he had never called him nephew before), "I believe you'll do it!"

"I know I shall," laughed the excited Wallace. "It's only the surface of the rock that's cooled by the water, and we'll have it heated up again, soon."

"But what made you think of it?" Uncle Bent wished to know.

"Why, I knew perfectly well that heat expands all such substances, and cold contracts them again; and when they expand suddenly and equally, they break. And once when our class in natural philosophy was reciting, the teacher told us how, when the great fire was in Boston, granite flew to pieces, especially if a column of water struck them when they were hot. I remembered it when you said you wanted to get rid of the boulder; and when I saw that the rock was quite porous, and saw also the brush-heaps, I concluded I would take the job."

Uncle Bent had conceived a sudden respect for his nephew. That respect was heightened considerably four days later, when he went out to look at the completely demolished boulder, and the following dialogue occurred:

"Well nephew, you've got some pretty good heaps of stone here. I'll save you the further trouble of taking them away."

"But I don't want you to save me the trouble," said Wallace.

"What do you mean to do with 'em?" Uncle Bent asked in some surprise.

"Sell 'em!" said Wallace.

"Sell 'em?" echoed the old man.

"What are they good for?"

"Good for Wall-stone; especially for the foundation of a barn—if anybody is going to build one right on the spot." And Wallace turned up a keen eye at his Uncle.

"You mean I am to buy them of you?"

"They are worth more to you than to anybody else. But if you don't want them, I've talked with the carpenters; I know who will take them."

Uncle Bent was astonished, but not displeased.

"Well, what do you ask for 'em?"

"Mr. Wilson looked at them this forenoon; he said they were worth ten dollars to you—he would give me five dollars, and haul them away."

"Well, well, nephew; it's a sharp bargain you are driving with your uncle! But it's all right. You shall have your ten dollars for breaking up the rock, and ten more for the rock now it is broken. And I'll tell you what! Come and work for me. You may choose your own place—in the store or in the mill. I guess a boy with such a head as yours on his shoulders can be made useful."

"You are too late," replied the nephew. "I've just engaged myself to a friend of Mr. Wilson's. I am going to be an architect.—Companion."

—Young man, don't waste your energies wearing too delicate a shade of clothes; the girls don't care for them. Their own finery occupies their attention.