

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH.

"We'll have a cold spell pretty soon, For the back-blow's blazé is blue."

"The red and yellow leaves on the trees Will be seared to a dull, dead brown,"

And we huddled up to gran'ma's knees As she sat in the big armchair,

We watched the blue blazé flicker out And the back-blow, to embers turned,

PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

"Yes, mother, he will come, Of course, he will come!" and the girl turned her drawn and anxious young face toward the cottage door,

It is probable that the old woman divined the longing glance from the change in the girl's tone, for she, too, half turned toward the door.

There was in both of them a subtle sense of clinging. It was hard to die without touching the reward of a wondrous patience. It was cruel to deprive the girl of this burden, for in most burdens there is a safeguard, in all a duty, and in some the greatest happiness allotted to human existence.

It was no new thing, this waiting for the scapegrace son; the girl had grown up to it, for she would not know her brother should see meet him in the street.

He had left them eighteen years before in a fit of passionate resentment against his father, whose only fault had been too great indulgence for the son of his old age.

There are some people who hold this view still, but they cannot do so much longer. Strikes, labor troubles and the difficulties of domestic service; so-called gentleman farmers, gentleman shopkeepers and lady milliners—above all, a few colonies peopled by university failures—will teach us in time that to educate our sons above their station is to handicap them cruelly in the race for life.

Stephen Leach was one of the early victims in this craze. His father, having risen by the force of his own will and the capabilities of his own mind from the people to the church, held, as such men do, that he had only to give his son a good education to insure his career in life.

It was strange that Stephen had not spoken yet, and it was perhaps just as well, because there are occasions in life when men do wisely to keep silent.

"He is strong," the proud mother went on. "I can feel it. His hands are large and steady and quiet and his arms are big and very hard."

"Your voice is deeper than your father's ever was," she said, and all the while her trembling fingers moved lovingly over his face, touching the deep cut from cheek bone to jaw with soft inquiry.

"He will come, Joyce," she would say, "he will surely come."

"Yes, mother, he will come," was her usual answer; and one day she gave a little exclamation of surprise and almost of fear.

In bed staring with her sightless orbs toward the window.

"Go," said the old lady, breathlessly, "go and let him in yourself."

"Am I too late?" he asked in a voice which almost seemed to indicate a hope that it might be so.

"No, Stephen," she answered. "But mother cannot live much longer. You are just in time."

The young man made a hesitating little movement with his right hand and shuffled unasily on the clean stone step. He was like an actor called suddenly upon the stage, having no knowledge of his part.

Stephen Leach followed silently. He was rather large for the house, and especially for the stairs; moreover, he had a certain burlesque of walk, such as is acquired by men living constantly in the open.

Here Stephen Leach seemed to know better what to do. He held his mother in his arms while she sobbed and murmured out her joy.

It would seem that the best part of happiness is the sharing of it with someone else. "Joyce," was the first distinct word the old lady spoke.

The young man had sunk upon his knees at the bedside, probably because it was the most convenient position. He did not second his mother's proposal with much enthusiasm.

"Joyce," continued the old lady feverishly, "I am not afraid to die now, for Stephen is here. Your brother will take care of you, dear, when I am gone."

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"He is strong," the proud mother went on. "I can feel it. His hands are large and steady and quiet and his arms are big and very hard."

"Yes," she said, "I knew he would grow to be a big man. His little fingers were so strong—he hurt me sometimes. What a great mistake! I knew you had been a soldier. And the skin of your face is brown and a little rough. What is this? what is this, Stephen, dear? Is this a wound?"

"Yes," answered the prodigal, speaking for the first time. "That is a sword cut. I got that in the last war. I was a colonel in the Chilian army, or was, before I resigned."

"The old lady's sightless eyes were fixed on his face as if listening for the echo of another voice in his deep, quiet tones.

"Your voice is deeper than your father's ever was," she said, and all the while her trembling fingers moved lovingly over his face, touching the deep cut from cheek bone to jaw with soft inquiry.

"I promise that," he replied, without raising his eyes.

Such was the home coming of the prodigal. After all he arrived at the right moment in the afternoon, when the house was ready. It sometimes does happen so in real life, and not only in books.

"Yes, mother, he will come," was her usual answer; and one day she gave a little exclamation of surprise and almost of fear.

After the first excitement of the return was over it became glaringly apparent that Stephen had arrived just in time. His mother fell into a happy sleep before sunset, and when the active young doctor came a little later in the evening he shook his head.

"Yes," he said, "I see that she is asleep and quiet—too quiet. It is a foretaste of a longer sleep. Some old people have it."

For the first time Joyce's courage seemed to give way. When she had been alone she was brave enough, but now that her brother was there, womanlike, she seemed to turn to him with a sudden fear.

The doctor knew something of the history of the small family thus momentarily united, and he had always feared that if Stephen Leach did return it would only kill his mother. This, indeed, seemed to be the result about to follow.

Presently the doctor took his leave. He was a young man engaged in getting together a good practice, and in his own interest he had been forced to give up waiting for his patients to finish dying.

"I am glad you are here," he said to Stephen, who accompanied him to the door. "It would not do for your sister to be alone; this may go on for a couple of days."

It did not go on for a couple of days, but Mrs. Leach lived through that night in the same semi-comatose state. The two watchers sat in her room until supper time, when they left their mother in charge of a hired nurse, whose services Joyce had been forced to seek.

After supper Stephen Leach seemed at last to find his tongue, and he talked in his quiet, almost gentle voice, such as some men possess, not about himself or the past, but about Joyce and the future.

It is not in times of gayety that friendships are formed, but in sorrow or suspense. During that long evening this brother and sister suddenly became intimate, more so than months of prosperous intercourse could have made them.

"I shall sleep perfectly if it is not the first time I have slept in my clothes," he said simply.

They went upstairs together and told the nurse of this arrangement. Joyce remained for some moments by the bedside watching her mother's peaceful sleep, and when she turned she found that Stephen had quietly slipped away.

The next morning Mrs. Leach was fully conscious and appeared to be stronger; nevertheless she knew that the end was near. She called her two children to her bedside and, turning her blind eyes toward them, spoke in broken sentences:

"I am ready now—I am ready," she said. "Dears, I am going to your father—and I * * * thank God, I can tell him that I left you together. I always knew Stephen would come back. I found it written everywhere in the Bible. Stephen—kiss me, dear!"

"Ah," she sighed, "how I wish I could see you—just once before I die. Joyce!" she added, suddenly turning to her daughter, who stood at the other side of the bed, "tell me what he is like. But I know * * * I know—I feel it. Listen! He is tall and spare, like his father. His hair is black, like his father's—it was black before he went away. His eyes, I know, are dark—almost dark. He is pale—like a Spaniard!"

Joyce looked across the bed with slow horror dawning in her face, looked into a pair of blue eyes beneath tawny hair, cut short, as a soldier's hair should be. She looked upon a man big, broad, fair—English from crown to toe—and the quiet command of his lips and eyes made her say:

"Yes, mother, yes." For some moments there was silence. Joyce stood pale and breathless, wondering what this might mean. Then the dying woman spoke again: "Kiss me," she said. "I * * * am going. Stephen first—my first born! And now, Joyce * * * and now kiss each other—across the bed! I want to hear * * * I want * * * to tell * * * your * * * father."

With a last effort she raised her hands, seeking their heads. At first Joyce hesitated, then she leant forward, and the old woman's chilled fingers pressed their lips together. That was the end.

Half an hour afterward Joyce and this man stood facing each other in the little dining room. He began his explanation at once.

"Stephen," he said, "was shot—out there—as a traitor. I could not tell her that! I did not mean to do this, but what else could I do?"

He paused, moved toward the door with that strange hesitation which she had noticed on his arrival. At the door he turned to justify himself. "I still think," he said gravely, "that it was the best thing to do."

stood in her eyes. There was something very pathetic in the distress of this strong man, facing, as it were, an emergency of which he felt the delicacy to be beyond his cleverness to handle.

"Last night," he went on, "I made all the necessary arrangements for your future—just as Stephen would have made them—as a brother might have done. I * * * He and I were brother officers in a very wild army. Your brother was not a good man. None of us were."

His hand was on the door. "He asked me to come and tell you," he added. "I shall go back now."

They stood thus, he watching her face with his honest, soft blue eyes, she failing to meet his glance.

"May I come back, again?" he asked suddenly.

"I will come back in six months," he announced quietly, and then he closed the door behind him.—Cornhill Magazine.

CONCERTS GIVEN BY CRICKETS.

When the Weather Suits Them the Little Insects Make Merry Music.

There is something remarkable in the regularity, or perfect time, of the chirps of tree crickets. You do not find it a "go as you please" concert—every cricket for himself; but all the crickets in a given locality seem to be following a leader, keeping perfect time with each other.

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Justice—You are charged with stealing Col. Julep's chickens. Have you any witnesses?

Uncle Moses—I heb not. I don't steal chickens befo' witnesses.—Amusing Journal.

If sinners were not occasionally found out, other sinners would not know how good they are.

It is surprising how sick some people can become, and live.



DEPENDS ON WHO IS ELECTED.

A NOVEL marriage agreement which will be decided on the result of the rational election, has been made in the town of Seabrook, Mass. The parties interested in the agreement are Miss Lillie Jackman, Ellis Goodman and Frank Bardine. The two men are friends and also suitors for the hand and heart of the young woman who figures in the novel arrangement.

From Paris comes a new collar, which is a combination of the ribbon stock and high linen collar. Its novelty has made it an immediate success. The collar is of linen, about as high as the ordinary collar, and let out clerical fashion, not opening at all in front.



THE NEW COLLAR.

through these holes ribbons are run which tie in the back in a large bow. The ribbons are so folded that they are narrow when drawn through the holes, but spread out to their full width when they form the bow.

Bridesmaids and Their Duties.

In olden days the bridesmaids were supposed to look after the bride's pecuniary interest. Thus, at the church porch, when the bridegroom produced the ring and other articles relating to his marriage, the chief bridesmaid took charge of the "dow purse," which was publicly given to the bride as an installment of her pin money.

"Our wedding is over very properly, though with little ceremony, and nothing of ancient fashion, but two bridesmaids. The endowing purse, I believe, has been left off since the broad pieces were called in and melted down."

It has been pointed out, however, that a survival of this usage is revived in Cumberland. The bridegroom provides himself with gold and crown pieces, and when the service reaches the point, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," he takes the money, hands the clerkman his fee, and pours the rest into a handkerchief which the bridesmaid holds for the bride.

Dress Costing Too Much.

The other day half a dozen women were talking together, not one of whom had money in her own or her husband's right. All were the wives of men on salaries—high salaries. Said one of them: "It is dreadful how our ideas grow without our bank accounts growing in proportion. Now, we have just as much, and no more, than we had to live on ten years ago, and—"

once I should not have thought of spending more than \$17 or \$18 for my little girls' winter coats, now I would not dream of starting out to buy one without at least \$40 to pay for it."

Trap Shooting as a Fad.

Among Eastern society women with a bent for athletics trap shooting is just now the reigning fad. Mrs. Jack Astor being one of the most ardent disciples. She is an expert in this healthful pastime, as she is in revolver practice, enjoying special distinction in that pastime of Diana. Mrs. Astor sustains her enviable reputation of being the best and most appropriately gowned woman in



MRS. ASTOR IN SHOOTING GARB.

any assemblage. Her favorite costume when on gunning bent is supplemented by leggings of like material. Style and comfort are combined in the loose-fitting Norfolk jacket, coming down well over the hips, and fashioned upon the same plan as that worn by men. Under this she dons a silk negligee shirt, of contrasting hue or in varying tones of delicate tints. Alpine is the preferred hat, and her shoes are square toed and broad soled, harmonizing in color with the charming shooting frock. Trap shooting trains the eye, and is regarded as a superior nerve tonic. The practice is said to develop the nerves better than the use of dumbbells or the exercise of swimming.

Process of Making Hairpins.

For ages the English and French controlled the manufacture of hairpins, and it is only within the last twenty years that the goods have been produced in other countries to any extent. The machinery used is of a delicate and intricate character, as the prices at which the pins are sold necessitate the cheapest and most rapid progress, which can only be procured by automatic machines. The wire is made expressly for the purpose and put up in large coils, which are placed in a clamp and so carried to the machine while being straightened. This machine cuts, bends and by a delicate and instantaneous process sharpens the points. Running at full speed, it will turn out 120 hairpins every minute. To economize, it is necessary to keep the engines going day and night. The difficult part of the work is in the enameling, which is done by dipping the pins in a preparation and baking in an oven. It is here that the most constant and careful attention is required, as the pins must be absolutely smooth and the enamel have a perfect polish. The slightest particle of dust causes imperfections and roughness.

The American Girl Won.

A recent prize contest in London for the most prettily costumed lady cyclist fell to Madeline Kilpatrick, the accom-



MADLINE KILPATRICK.

plished trick performer. Aside from being an American girl, her mount was of American make; costume the same, the latter being made by herself. The contest was one in which American ideas were prominent.

The average woman's idea of comfort is to run around the house in a draggly wrapper, with her hair down her back.—New York Press.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including names like 'Mrs. Astor', 'Madeline Kilpatrick', and 'SURI'.