



THE OLD LIBRARY

MRS. MERRYDEW'S RESIGNATION.

It's just what I always predicted. Mrs. Merrydew, I knew this sort of thing with a flourish around her cool, airy kitchen, with the ball-fringed curtains fluttered in the breeze and the tall clock told of the seconds with its leisurely deliberation. "Was a deal too good to last! I dreamed last night that I saw Sam in his winding sheet, and this morning when the letter came I knew what was in it, word for word, before ever I broke the seal!"

"What has happened?" eagerly questioned Hitty Johnson, the village gossip, who had stopped on her way to the place where she was engaged for a day's work at dressmaking to ask how Mrs. Merrydew's rheumatism was. "He ain't dead?"

"Dead!" croaked the old lady, "what a start you do give one, to be sure! Dead of course he ain't dead! He's only married!"

"Well, I declare," said Hitty, "if that don't beat all! Your Sam married?"

"Married last week," said Mrs. Merrydew, "and going to bring his bride to see me to-day. What am I going to do, I'd like to know, with a dainty fine lady from the city, who don't know a spinning wheel from a clothes press, and never put her hands into a pan of good scalding dishwater in her life?"

"Well, but," said Hitty Johnson, "it seems to me as if that was borren trouble after she's done! How do you know but what you'll like her?"

"Did you ever know one of these city girls that was worth her salt?" contemptuously demanded Mrs. Merrydew. "Not every body knows what my back has been, all my life long, and there was a bad egg in the bin! I was always certain sure to get it; if I bought ticket No. 7 in the raffle at a church fair, No. 8 was always the ticket to draw the prize. I didn't expect anything better, and I'm resigned to the Lord's will! Oh, dear, dear, this is a hard world to live in!"

"A queer kind of resignation," thought Miss Hitty, as she hastened on, leaving Mrs. Merrydew with her eyes with a yellow silk pocket handkerchief and sighing like any furnace. "And if Sam Merrydew really has got married, I hope to goodness he's got a woman who will take the world quite so hard as his mother does!"

"Yes, I'm resigned," said Mrs. Merrydew, as she cut the white, crisp fall apples into juicy slices for a tart, and mournfully slipped the stove with fresh wood. "Those Sam's wife will keep the old china and the silver candlesticks and the houghten carpets as I've done; no, and she won't set no more by the old furniture that has been in the Merrydew family for a generation and a half. She'll set and fold her hands, and let everything go to wrack and ruin—but I'm resigned, and Sam, he'll be neglected, and his shirts will be destroyed, and his stockings won't be mended—who ever heard of a city lady taking the trouble to mend stockings? But I ain't one to grumble, and I always did say that, whatever happened, I would try to be resigned!"

The baking was all done—the table was set for tea, and the firelight gleaming through the cracks of the stove danced merrily up and down on the yellow-washed walls, and Mrs. Merrydew was alternately doing over her knitting and wiping surreptitious tears from her spectacle glasses, when there came a loud, insistent knocking at the door, and in walked a tall, unfriendly woman in a cheap blue silk dress, whose many train drew itself over the floor, and a black lace had overloaded with ragged artificial flowers.

"Bless me!" said Mrs. Merrydew, only half awake, "and are you?"

"I'm Sam's wife," said the young woman, looking around her with insolent interest. "And I s'pose you're my mother-in-law?"

"You?" gasped the poor old lady, scarcely able, at first, to realize the meaning of the handsome stranger's words. "You Sam's wife? It can't be possible!"

The young woman untied the strings of her bonnet with a laugh, and flung it carelessly on the table.

"I guess I ain't good enough for you," said she. "Sam said his folks wouldn't just fancy me at first, but we're tight married and there's no help for it; so you'll just have to make the best of things."

"You—you are from the city?" heaped upon Mrs. Merrydew, not knowing what else to say.

"I waited in a restaurant," said Sam's wife. "That's where he first saw me, in New York."

"He never told me that," said Mrs. Merrydew, faintly.

"I s'pose it's dreadful full and poky out here," said the young woman, with a shrug of her pretty tawdry shoulders. "Do the crickets always keep on cheep-cheeping like this? And don't the wind ever stop moaning through the trees? Dear me, what a crazy looking old clock! Why don't you change it off for something modern? Tea? No, I don't care for tea. I'd a deal rather have a glass of beer. I'd a deal rather see me up when I feel faint. Or s'praps you might put just a drop of gin or spirits in the tea?"

Mrs. Merrydew grew sick at heart—she leaned up against the wall and closed her eyes.

"Is this my only son's wife?" she asked herself. "This coarse, untidy, half-educated creature? Oh, what have I done to be punished like this? Sam's wife! In all the pictures of her that I painted to myself there was never one like this. No, never!"

And the picture of her boy's blighted life, her own desolate future, rose dark-

RENEWED OLD TREES.

How Beloved Old Landmarks May Be Preserved to Us.

Old trees are among the most cherished treasures of rural and suburban homes. They are the most costly, too, as every finished product is costly into which has entered the sweat and toil of man and creative processes which only long reaches of time can furnish. An old house may fall down or be destroyed by fire, and while we mourn the loss of the visible sign of old associations, a better and more beautiful structure can be made to take its place. But when an old tree that has been the guardian of the home for generations, and stood there before the home was founded, surrenders to the blast, the loss is beyond repair, for a long time at least. As there is no immediate remedy possible, the need of precaution becomes all the greater.

When one of these old sentinels begins to show signs of disease and decay, and year by year grows more and more feeble, it is not until it is tottering in its branches and weaker in leaf and power, we watch it as we watch a friend attacked by a slow but incurable malady. But remedies are now being discovered, and every ill of the body, and successful tree surgery is or may be as common as the higher form of that science. A recent number of Garden and Forest discusses the religious reverence of old trees, and gives practical directions for effecting it. Directly to the point are two illustrations of the same tree, a venerable oak in the Arnold Arboretum. The first is of a tree with far-reaching branches, but marred by inflexible rigidity of decrepitude, the leafage scanty and the general prospect of life discouraging.

The second illustration shows the same tree twelve years later, shorter of limb, it is true, but displaying every characteristic of youth and strength and hopeful promise of longevity. No miracle, not even one of nature's has been performed. The result is simply one of skillful tree surgery, of intelligent pruning according to the system, which, instead of sending the tree blood long distances through collapsed and withered arteries, contracts the area and applies the nourishing force in such a way that they can be assimilated and made to promote the growth of all the members.

The process is one which almost any intelligent farmer or tree owner should be able to apply. "Vigor can be restored to a tree in this condition by shortening all its branches by one-third or one-half their entire length. The only care needed in this operation is to cut back each main branch to a healthy lateral branch, which will serve to attract and elaborate by his own sap, leaves a sufficient flow of sap to insure the growth of the branch." These directions must be carefully observed to prevent further decay, and care must also be taken to leave the lowest limbs the longest, so that the weight of possible leaf surface shall be exposed to the light. So if some old tree, near roadside, or dwelling, that has been the landmark of a century, shows alarming symptoms, the owner should not despair before he has tried it according to the general plan here laid down.—Boston Transcript.

OURSUNDAY SERMONS

A FEW SUNDERS FOR ALL TO PONDER OVER.

Words of Wisdom, and Thoughts Worth Pondering Upon Spiritual and Moral Subjects—Gathered from the Religious and Secular Press.

The Baptist Chapel Car.

THE RAIL conditions in the country differ widely in different localities. In New York State, for example, the railroads are for the most part, prospering. In Illinois it is the testimony of the secretary of the Domestic Missionary Society that the rural churches are rapidly declining, in both membership and financial strength. There are no young people in their congregations. The older people are now being discarded, and survivors are impossible. "Unless strenuous efforts are put forth," says Secretary Van Horne, "many country churches in Illinois will become extinct."

The way to solve the problem of the country church, and especially the problem of the non-churching classes in the small towns of the prairies and the mountain regions of the country, the first chapel car was run in North Dakota, but it was run to no great purpose, for the reason that the Episcopal bishop who devised it was and is more noted for ability to plan work than to get down and do it. The car used to be hauled about the State free by the existing railroad companies, but Episcopal strength did not keep pace with the growth in population. This record was not the fault of the chapel car, but of the conditions which it only in part was able to combat.

Baptists took the chapel car idea six years ago, and have now four such cars, the last one having just been equipped and started out. These cars are under the charge of the American Baptist Publication Society. Last year these cars traveled 65,000 miles, held 1,500 meetings, and in them were preached 5,800 sermons. The number of families visited by car evangelists was 2,700, and the number of tracts distributed was 205,000. As a result of this work forty meeting-houses have been built, and in them were held 8,000 meetings, and there have been above 500 baptisms. Other denominations are contemplating the use of these chapel cars, and it may be, with some success, that the population of cities, towns and villages will be reached by this means, the country church problem.

"Cover My Defenseless Head."

Two Americans were crossing the Atlantic, sitting in the cabin on Sunday night, sing hymns. As they sang the last hymn, "Jesus Lover of My Soul," one of them heard an exceedingly rich and beautiful voice behind him. He looked around, and although he did not know the face, he thought that he knew the voice, so when the music ceased, he turned and asked the man if he had not been in the civil war. The man replied that he had been a Confederate soldier.

"Were you at such a place on such a night?" asked the first.

"Yes," he replied, "and a curious thing happened that night which this hymn has helped me to remember. I was posted on sentry duty near the edge of a wood. It was a dark night and very cold, and I was a little frightened because the enemy were supposed to be very near. I was very nervous, and everything was very still and I was feeling homesick and miserable, and weary. I thought that I would comfort myself by praying and singing a hymn. I remember singing this hymn: 'All my trust on Thee I lay, O God, my Father, Friend and God, my Father, Friend and God, my Father, Friend and God, my Father, Friend and God.'"

"With the shadow of Thy wing,"

"After singing that, a strange peace came to my mind, and through the long night I felt no more fear."

"Now," said the other, "listen to my story. I was a Union soldier and was in the wood that night with a party of scouts. I saw you standing, although I did not know your name, and I saw their rifles focused upon you, and I saw the word to fire, but when you sang out, 'Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wing,' I said, 'God, your rifles, we will go home!'"

Rev. W. Francis Irwin at the Fifth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, preached recently on "The Mission of Sensitiveness." In the course of his sermon he said:

"Books are an important factor in the training and directing of the sensitive spirit. Above all other books stands the Bible, to bring nearer to God and make us kinder to men. Its counsels are an unerring guide in the selection between the good and the evil. The late Charles A. Dana occupied a unique place in Journalism. His literary style was peculiarly striking. In his book, 'Art of Newspaper Making,' he writes of the letter delivered before the Wisconsin Editorial Association. In speaking of the education of the journalist he said: 'There are some books that are absolutely indispensable to the kind of education that we are contemplating, and to the profession that we are entering; and of all these the most indispensable, the most useful, the one whose knowledge is most effective, is the Bible. There is no book from which more valuable lessons can be learned. I am considering it now not as a religious book but as a manual of utility, of professional preparation, and of professional life. There is no style more suggestive and more effective, from which you learn more directly, that sublime simplicity which never exaggerates, which recounts the greatest without ostentation, which is plain without being plain, which is simple without being simple, which you open with such confidence and lay down with such reverence.'"

"There is no book like the Bible, when you get into it, and you want exactly the right answer, when you are looking for an expression, when there is that closes the dispute like a verse from the Bible? What is it that sets up the right principle for a cause, which pleads for a policy, for a cause, so much as the right passage of holy scripture?"

Some Things to Forget.

Brooding over mistakes, misfortunes, disappointments, is like carrying un-forgotten sins. But cherishing grudges, remembering injuries, reviving wrongs, is making one's self the devil's packhorse, weighed with the misdeeds of other men. The burdens of this work when carried are exasperating

beyond expression, for they rub the sore places into frozen agonizing. Here is an example: For a paltry difference in a settlement the exact sum was \$11 a man of standing in society carried his grudge daily to forget his own sins by repeating them, and by unpunished integrity, honor and piety, through years, till his mind gave way under, who shall say what unhealthful stress of morbid memory? To go out under such a darkness is the way to death. If you say that a man may not be so daily to forget his own sins by repeating them, and by unpunished integrity, honor and piety, through years, till his mind gave way under, who shall say what unhealthful stress of morbid memory? To go out under such a darkness is the way to death. If you say that a man may not be so daily to forget his own sins by repeating them, and by unpunished integrity, honor and piety, through years, till his mind gave way under, who shall say what unhealthful stress of morbid memory? 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