

THE WOODPECKER.

Art theman, operator, messenger. In sun, since climbing in no task. Hotsun. And, boylike, thou canst play the lute.

THE RING OF GOLD

Martin Daly had become discouraged. Like many another miner in the far west, he had made money and lost it, had prospected for mines, found ore and been cheated out of his rights, had grown poor and ill, and had thrown himself under a tree, careless whether he lived or died.

The great snowy mountain peaks and the rich verdure had lost their attraction for him. He had hoped and been disappointed so many times that he had come to believe himself unlucky; that he should never possess a dollar; that there was neither happiness nor home for him.

He had done many good acts, had always helped his brother miners, had tried to look on the bright side of life, had fought manfully and been defeated in the battle. He had imagined sometimes that the clouds had a silver lining, but the storms always came sooner or later. He meditated thus as he lay under the tree, and finally, more dead than alive from want and exhaustion, fell asleep.

Two men passed along under the brow of the mountain, by the tree. They were tall and straight, and from their dark hair and skin it was easy to perceive their Indian blood.

"The white man is dead," said one of the men as he bent on his knee beside the sleeper.

"No, there is a twitching of the eyelids," said the other. "He is pale and sick. I will take him home and Mimosa will care for him."

The conversation, carried on in a low tone, awakened the miner.

"Come with us and you shall have food and shelter," said the friendly Indian.

Scarcely able to bear his weight Martin leaned upon the arms of the two men, and soon found himself in the humble Indian cabin.

"Mimosa, here is a stranger. Take care of him. Red Cloud never left a human being to die. He will get well, and then we will send him back to his people."

A shy, pale Indian girl came forward and did as she was bidden. She did not speak, but looked very pityingly out of her fawnlike dark eyes. When Martin had been placed in the simple bed she prepared food for him and fed him as though he were a child. Day by day she came and went, speaking little, but doing gently the things which only a woman's hands can do.

After a time the miner, still a young man, gained in strength and began once more to hope for a successful future.

"Mimosa," he said one day, "I owe my life to you, and if I am ever rich I will come back and reward you."

"I shall miss you," said the girl shyly. "But I want no money. I shall be happy because you are well again and happy."

"I shall yet find gold, Mimosa. I need to think I should be rich, and then I became poor and sick and lost heart. You wear a ring on your finger and sometimes a chain about your neck, both of beaten gold. Did the metal come from mines near here?"

"My father gave them to me," she replied, and nothing more could be learned from her on the subject.

"Would you care, Mimosa, if I wore the ring until I went away? Perhaps I can find the place where the gold came from."

"You may wear it till you come back rich," she said smiling.

Days grew into weeks, and the time drew near for the miner to say good-bye to the girl who had become his comrade as well as deliverer. Tears filled her eyes as they parted. "You will forget Mimosa," she said.

"No, I will bring back the ring, and you shall give it to the man who makes you his bride. I shall never forget Red Cloud nor his daughter."

his nature. He remembered that she looked sad at his going away. He wondered if she ever thought about him. If she had some Indian suitor, would she not wish for the ring again? He would like, at least, to see the man and his daughter who had saved his life. He would carry back the ring. Ah! if he knew where the gold in it came from, perhaps he could indeed become rich, and then who could make him so happy as Mimosa?

Months only increased the loneliness in Martin's heart. He was becoming discouraged again. He even began to fear

that Mimosa was married, and his soul awakened to a sense of loss. He would go back just once and see her, and on his journey back he would sit for a half hour under the tree where Red Cloud had found him.

"What ails Martin?" said one miner to another. "He must be in love—no fun in him as in the old days. Going to quit camp, he says."

After Martin had decided to go to see Red Cloud, his heart seemed lighter. If Mimosa were married he could at least show her his gratitude. And if she were not? Well, it would be very restful to see her once more!

He started on his journey. The full moon was rising as he neared the old tree, where Red Cloud had found him. As he approached he was startled by a white figure. He turned aside for a moment, and then went cautiously up to the great trunk. Two dark eyes full of tears gazed up into his eyes, at first with a startled look and then with a gleam of joy and trust.

"Mimosa," he exclaimed, and clasped the Indian girl in his arms.

"Why are you here, child, at this time of night?"

"I came here to think of you, Martin, and the moonlight is so sweet and comforting. The green trees and the mountains tell me of you."

"I have brought you back the ring, Mimosa."

"And are you rich yet? You were to keep it till you were rich."

"No; but I would be rich, perhaps, if you would tell me where the gold in the ring was found."

"My father gave it to me," she replied quietly.

"Mimosa, would you love me if I were rich?"

"Perhaps I should be afraid of you if you were."

"Would you love me if I remained poor as I am now?"

"Yes, always."

"And if I became sick and could not care for you, what then?"

"I would care for you, Martin."

"I have brought back the ring, Mimosa, that you may give it to the man who shall make you his bride."

"And would you like to keep the ring yourself, Martin?"

"Yes, dearest."

They went back to the home of Red Cloud, happy because promised to each other in marriage.

After a quiet wedding Mimosa said one day, "Come with me, Martin, and I will show you where the gold in the ring and the necklace were found."

Not very far from the tree where the miner had lain down discouraged Mimosa pointed out the shining ore, the spot known only to the few Indians.

"Mimosa, there is a mine here! This gold is the outcropping of the veins. I shall yet be rich, my darling."

"Would you surely love me as much, Martin, if you were rich?"

"I would give you everything your heart desired."

"And not go into an eastern country, and be great, and forget Mimosa?"

"Never!"

With a happy heart Martin Daly took his pick to the mountains. The shining ore opened under his touch. His claim each day showed more value. He had, indeed, become rich through the ring of Mimosa.

Years have passed. Two thousand dollars are taken each day from the mine. The children of the Indian girl, educated, gentle as their mother and energetic as their father, are in a handsome house. Love in that home has kept as bright as the gold in the mountain.—Sarah K. Bolton in Independent.

Instinct in Roots.

There seems to be an orderly instinct in roots that cannot be accounted for. When the seed sprouts and the stem starts upward to make the trunk, one bud pushes down into the earth to form a top root. What it is that gives the order for one to push up and one to push down is incomprehensible. But, more than this, while the top root is descending deep into the ground, as if to anchor the tree securely against wind and storm, other roots start to grow horizontally just beneath the surface of the ground. These surface roots are at first but mere fibers. When the autumn arrives, and the leaves fall, most of these fibers die also, leaving only a few to live over, and these become permanent surface roots.

We know why some live to become permanent roots, as against the thousands which die. We say they are gifted with greater vital power. They were able to get more nutrition than the others, and nutrition to some extent means vigorous life—but in what way this ordering of some roots to go down as anchors, and the others to spread out near the surface where food is, to act as feeders, is just as deep an unexplained problem as it was hundreds of years ago.—Thomas Meehan in Philadelphia Ledger.

The serpent's Venom.

A physician while talking with a group of friends remarked: "It is common to hear people speak about poisonous serpents. Serpents are never poisonous, they are venomous. A poison cannot be taken internally without bad effects; a venom can. Venoms to be effective have to be injected directly into the circulation, and this is the manner in which the snakes kill. Their venom taken internally is innocuous."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Sancy Mignon.

After her bath one day, when Mignon saw that her maid had turned her back, she began playing with the water. "Take your hands out of the water, Mignon. You know it is forbidden to play with your bath," said the maid. "If you had paid attention to what you were doing, you would not have seen me," answered the little mixx.—Brooklyn Eagle.

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"What did she see about old Donats to attract her?" "He is half dead."

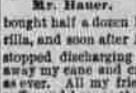
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