The poet may sing Like a bird on the wing, And the proser accustom his quill To a talented strain, But I mean to maintain

That there's one thing which passes their skil. It has never been sung By terrestrial tongue

It has never by pen been reheared How includy prized And how much idolized in the homestead is baby the first!

Not for Ossas of gold. Upon Pelions rolled, Not for pearls to the firmament piled, Not for rubies galore, Or the great Kohinoor Would the mother relinquish that child. She would brave the high fire

She would brave the high fire Of a Didoesque pyre, She would patiently hunger and thirst If her sperifice brave Could by any means save From one pang her sweet baby the first!

Oh, that dear little thing Is the queen or the king household in which it had birth. For the mother's strong love Simply ranks it above Yes, she fondly contrives

To believe that its "hives" Is of earthly diseases the worst, And its tiniest ache Will induce her to wake All the night beside baby the first!

Bubies second and third Have no reason to "gird" At the motherly treatment they get. Babies four, five and six, hey are much indulged chicks.

Each in turn is called "Ma's ickle pet," But the babes who succeed Number one would indeed Pick a crow with mamma, if they durst, Could they guess how much loss is

The love she possesses For them than for baby the first!

### A MOUNTAIN GIRL.

"Whoa!"

The command was unnecessary, for both horse and driver were willing to stop and rest under the shade of the oaks and poplars that hot July noon. From early morn, when the dew was on the grass, until now, when the sun was overhead, Mr. George Glade had driven his faithful horse over the wild, rough mountain roads of the Blue Ridge, and the place was too inviting for him to pass by.

Mr. Slade was a schoolteacher, and his academy, as it was called, stood under the shadow of Mount Lopateka, one of the tallest peaks of the Blue Ridge. He was, at the time of which we speak, returning to his home from the nearest railroad town, 30 miles away. Some years ago, warned by approaching disease, he had left his native home in Massachusetts for a warmer clime. Attracted by the wild mountain scenery and the balmy air, which seemed to banish his pulmonary troubles, he had made his home among these hardy and hospitable mountaineers. He had again entered upon his old occupation. which he had followed in his early manhood in his New England home, and was now at the head of a flourishing school in this secladed country. His habits were simple, and his slender income was sufficient to satisfy his wants. He was alone in the world, and he had long ago decided to make his permanent home here among the mountains. It was not long before he became attached to these bardy mountaineers, and he readily accommodated himself to the primitive style of living. Although a man of northern birth and one who had worn the blue, he gave full credit to those who had worn the gray for honesty of purpose. In return he stood high in the esteem of all who knew him. His work in the schoolroom was making its impress on the community, and the children were devotedly attached to the patient, white haired old man. It was but soldom that he went out in the busy world which lay beyond the mountains encircling the lovely valley where he had made his home. On this occasion he was returning to his home by a route which was new to him, and the picturesque beauty of this Switzerland of the

south had never before made such deep impression upon him. A lovelier spot to spend the noonday hour could not have been found. Hard by was a bold spring, gushing out from the foot of the mountain at the head of a valley which sloped gently northward toward the Tennessee. The little stream formed by the spring went dashing down the hillside, winding its way among the bowlders, now flowing smoothly along over its publiy bed, then turning with swift current around some steep declivity, soon to reappear as it fell foaming and sparkling in the sunshine over a rocky ledge and again stretching out like a band of silvered ribbon until it was lost in the distance, around, on almost every side, the everlasting mountains, reaching up to the cloudless sky, clothed at this season of the year in greenest verdure, with their wooded crests and the deep blue other back grounds appearing like the gently rolling waves of the sea. Nestled among the jutting cliffs at the mountain base stood a bumble log cabin, and across the road in the little field on the billeide in the growing corn could be seen an ox harnessed to a plow and toiling up the incline, and behind the plow, holding on with all her strongth to the handle, was a half grown girl. The attention of Mr. Slade, who had unharmoused his here and was proporing to lead the antmal to the ford of the little brock below the spring, was attracted. He saw her, as the ox reached the and of the row, stop, and shading her eyes with one hand

look up at the sun-As if satisfied that the poontide had one, she quickly released the little spotted or from his trappings. The or needed no word of nominand, but turned and made his way suprily down the slope to the brook to quouch his thirst. The girl followed and reached the stream as soon as the az bad stuck his head to the running water. Him stood for several moments with her hare feet in the clear, cold water; then, throwing back her consequent bornet a still it rested on her choulders, she stoop of down and washed her hands, and then dipping up the wator to her open paims betterf her face, fory with the heat, and brushed back her tangled hair. Her totlet was finish. | a piece of bacca. Then the old cow-

What a picture!

Standing in the running brook, under the blossoming branches of a bending mountain ivy, with its white and crimson flowers touching her hair, now released from its homespun covering where the sunlight and shadow met and mingled, her cheeks aglow from the morning's toil, and her eyes, blue as the ether above, turned toward the humble home on the hillside, she was indeed a child of nature-a true type of the mountain girl.

"Good morning, miss," said Mr. Slade, who had approached unperceived by the girl, who had been busy with her ablutions.

The girl, startled by the sound of a human voice, sprang from the brook and prepared for flight in the direction of the cabin, but seeing the kindly face of the old gentleman she stopped and ac-

knowledged his salutation with a nod. "Do you live here?" asked Mr. Slade. "Yes," she replied, pointing toward the cabin.

"Now," said Mr. Slade as his horse came up from the brook after satisfying his thirst, "can I not get a cool drink from the spring?"

"Oh, yes! I've got a gourd there," replied the girl as she led the way to the spring.

Taking a large gourd which hung on a broken bough of a poplar tree overshadowing the spring, she dipped it brimming full of the ice cold water to the thirsty traveler.

"Ah, that's a drink fit for a king," said the gentleman after he had almost drained the contents of the gourd. "That's what pap says," said the maid. "There bain't no colder water in

the Blue Ridge," she continued, filling the gourd again and putting it to her "Who is pap?" asked Mr. Slade. "Pap! Why he is my father."

"I know that, but I intended to ask his name. "John Hale. Howsomever, people as knows him calls him Cap'n Hale, 'cause,

you see, he was in the big war." 'What's your name, my child?" "Ida."

"Where's your mother, Ida?" "Mother's gone to heaven more 'an two year ago; leastways she said she was goin there, and I believe it. See,' she said softly, pointing to a mound or the hillside near the cottage.

"And have you no brothers?" "Nary one, only two little sisters, Lucy and Sallie."

"Where is your father? Why is he not plowing instead of you?"

'See here, mister, pap ain't able to plow nor do nothin else. He can't walk nor set up. He's got what they calls par'lysis. I told you as how pap was in the war. Well, over yonder at Chickamanga, where there was a big fight, the Yankees shot pap two times, and they almost killed him. I hate Yankees, don't

Mr. Slade was silent. She continued her story: "After awhile pap mended and got so he could walk around some with a crutch and work a little bit. Ma has told me as how afore the war she and pap had a-plenty to live on, but when he come home from Chickamauga it was all gone. Pap is a mighty good man, and he done the best he could, and after awhile when we children was big enough we helped him, and ma, she always helped him. One day just before ma was tuck down sick pap was comin down the mountain, and he fell and hurt hisself in the hips where the Yankees shot him. Poor pap, he managed to kinder crawl home, and we all put him to bed, and he is in bed yet and can't turn hisself without help. Poor pap!" and the blue eyes grew moist, and there was a choking in her throat.

After a short pause she continued her story: "Ma tended him the best she could, and she sold one of the steersthe mate to Old Spot, out there-and she tuck the money, and she went and hired a doctor who lives way over you der across the mountain on the other side of the Hiawassee river to come and see pap. We all prayed while ma was gone that pap might live and git well, and the good Lord, he heard us children, and pap did live, and he was a sight better when ma and the doctor come. The doctor, he looked at pap, and he 'xamined him close, and he held down his head and studied and studied. Finally he looked up and said as how pap might live a long time, but he would never get up and be around any more. He said he would do all he could, but he nor nary other doctor was able to cure pap-poor pap! But that doctor wouldn't tech ma's money-not a cent of it. He's another one as is goin to heaven when he's dead and buried. Then ma, she tried to keep up, but she got weaker and weaker, and one day when the snow was on the ground, nigh on to two year ago, she come down to the spring, but she was so weak she couldn't git back up the hill. We children heard her call, and we come a rennin, and we found her a sittin over there on that rock as white as the snow sround. We children got her back to the house. The same doctor, he come, and he give ma physic, but—but ma never got up any more, and when the snow was all gone, and the poplar leaves was all out, and the mountain ivy was abloom, she said she was a goin to heaven, and she's

there now. She was slicut. Her simple story had

been told. There was something in Mr. Slade's throat which prevented him from speaking, but seeing the girl about to leave he acked, "Who makes a living for you

"Me and Old fipot," was the quick

"Can your father do nothing?" "Oh, yos, pap does a heap He's mighty nimble with his hands, if he onn's kurn over without help. We chiltres gathers straw and broom corn for him, and he makes hats and little basouts and brooms, and the doctor, he takes Mr. Stade's school and given the best opportunities of obtaining a finished and soils 'em for pap, and that money buys us clothes and shoes and sometimes

4 - 100

we nall her Beauty—she gives us milk, and me and Old Spot makes the bread. Oh, we is all doin tol'ble well. Then

pap helps us with our books, and I can read print and plain writin, and Lucy and Sallie, they knows their letters and can spell little bits of words. But when I know enough-and pap says God will provide a way for me to know all I want him. to know-I'll learn 'em all about the mountains, and the stars, and the big claimed. "What you come for?" world that is over youder across the mountains. But I must go and turn pap and help the children with the dinner. And she bounded up the hill like a

"Tell your father I will come in fow moments to see him," he called out to her.

She turned as she entered the cabin door and nedded her head.

Half an hour afterward Mr. Slade was seated in the humble home of the mountain girl. Her story was too true. There, stretched on a lowly bed, lay the poor paralytic, dead from his arms down, with his snow white hairwhitened not so much by the frosts of time as by the agony of sufferingbrushed smoothly back from his brow. It was the abode of poverty. There was but one room and but scanty furniture of the most primitive kind. There were the bed of the invalid was wheeled in the middle of the room, in order that he might catch the gentle breeze which came so refreshingly down the moun- ga." tain side. Over the fireplace on a rough shelf were a few well worn books and a broken jar, filled with the white and and white and blue violets, gathered all." that morning on the banks of the meandering creek.

And that old man was bright and

cheerful! All means that were in his reach had been used to restore him to vitality, but hope had fled, and he knew that he would never again rise up and walk. Life, even to him, had not lost all its joy and beauty. Upon Ida he rested for almost all aid, for the younger sisters were too small to render much assistance. Into her mind and soul he instilled a love for the beautiful, discernible in so many varied forms in the wild mountain scenery around their picturesque though humble home. Like the sunflower which grows so luxuriantly in this southern clime, his bed was always wheeled around so that he could see the morning sunlight as it streamed in through the door facing the east, and again, when the snn went down behind the mountain in the west, he loved for the last rays to fall in all their golden glory upon his head. Often when the moon was flooding mountain and stream and valley with mellow light he would ask Ida to wheel his bed near the open door, and then, with her hand in his, they would look down the beautiful valley and see the winding streamlet, with its banks lined with flowering ivy and laurel, looking like ghostly sentinels keeping silent watch over their mountain home. And

they thanked God for it all. ome knowledge of books, as the well thumbed volumes on the shelf testified, While her language was rude and imperfect and her information very limited, yet aspirations had been kindled in the heart of this child of the forest which she herself scarcely knew. Her life of toil, so hard for one of her sex and tender years, was sweetened by those longings which had begun to spring in her soul. She drew inspiration from all the objects around her-the grand old mountains, the thickly wooded forests, the cooing dove and the frisking squirrel, the bubbling spring and the running brook.

Mr. Slade had fastened his horse to the vehicle and was ready to depart as Ida came down to the ford of the brook, and whistling for the ox was preparing to return to her plowing on the hillside. "Ida," he said, "how would you like

to go to school and learn"-"Go to school!" she interrupted. Her blue eyes kindled as she continued, 'Ask me if I like to drink out of this spring when I am athirst, or to eat bread and honey when I am a-hungry. Go to school! But'-

"But what?" "What's the use of talkin, mister? Are you a schoolkeeper?" "Yes. I am teaching school across the

mountains, down in the Hiawassee valley. If you would like to go"-"Tain't no use to talk about it"-

and her voice had a ring of sadness in it-"I can't leave pap and Old Spot." Mr. Slade bade goodby to the mountain girl, but his mind was made up.

Providence was opening the way. The first opportunity after his return home he paid a visit to Dr. Baker, the kind hearted physician who had be-friended the Hales in their sickness and distress. Of his seanty means-scanty for a family of 13-be had given liberally to the stricken family. His profes-sional services and the needed medicines were never charged for, and under the righteous pretense of selling the baskets and mate made by the feeble fingers of the old paralytic many a dime and quarter found their way over the mountain to the little cabin by the spring.

"Never have I seen a mortal being bear his sufferings more patiently than Captain Hale. He's always as cheerful as a cricket, no matter if there isn't a crumb of bread nor a scrap of meat in the house," said Dr. Baker in explain-ing the situation of the family to Mr.

'As to Ide," he added, "she's as bright and as pretty as a picture. If she had the chance of a good education, pro-femor, she would be a queen among wo-men, or my name is not Billy Baker." "I intend to give her the chance," said Mr. blade, with decision. It was seen arranged. One of Dr.

Baker's tenants was to go over and take

eare of the little farm and the helpless

family, while ids was to be take a toto

Ten days after his first visit Mr. Slade was again drinking from the goard which hung on the broken twig by the side of the mountain spring.

education. Good Mrs. Baker volunteer-

ed to fit her up with a wardrobe which

would answer for present emergencies.

As Ida come across the brook, following Old Spot from the cornfield, she met

"Howdy, Mr. Slade?" she joyfully ex-"For you." "For me? What for, Mr. Slade?"

"To carry you back with me to school. "But I can't go. I can't leave pap and Old Spot and the children."

Her lips quivered, and the tears came "Yes, you can," said Mr. Slade, "for a man has come with me for the purpose of renting the farm. He will stay and take care of Old Spot and your father and the children.'

Her whole face shoue with joy. "A kind friend," he continued, "has provided a pair of shoes, a dress or two and some other things for you in that trunk in the wagen."

"Thank God!"

"Will you go?" "Yes, if pap is willin."

"He is not only willing, but anxious. I must tell you, however, before you two doors, both standing wide open, and | make up your mind that I am a

"The Lord has forgiven you for that." "But I was a soldier at Chickamau-

"The Lord will forgive you for that, too, if he will forgive me for hatin of you Yankees what shot and crippled crimson blossoms of the mountain ivy pap. I've done asked him to forgive us

"Then you'll soon be ready?" "Yes. And Mr. Slade-I can't tell it -but I want to say thanky. I am only a poor mountain girl, but if the good Lord lets me live I will thank you, and I'll work my fingers to the bone to pay

you back every cent you spend for me In an hour she had kissed her father, her sisters-and the truth must be told

-Old Spot, goodby, and was gone. \* \* Four years had passed by-four years of hard study and consecrated devotion to duty ou the part of Ida Hale. Nine months of each year had been spent at the school presided over by Professor Slade and the vacations back at the humble cottage by the spring, helping with her own hands to till the little farm and gather the harvest. Pap and Old Spot and the girls were always objects of her love and her care. The water of the spring was just as cold, the music of the running brook just as sweet, the white and crimson blossoms of the mountain ivy just as lovely and the towering peaks of the mountains just as grand as the day we first saw her plowing on the mountain side and bathing her rosy face in the cooling waters of the creek, where the sunlight played hide and seek among the blos-

But today she is to receive her diploma. Clad in her simple white dress, she stands upon the stage, and in a voice rich in melody yet softened by pathor. Captain Hall had done what he could she tells of her struggles and her aspirawith his imperfect education to give Ida tions, and all eyes grow moist and all hearts beat in sympathy with the barefoot mountain girl who was already a queen among women. -S. D. Bradwell in Atlanta Constitution.

> An Interesting Insurance Question. William Bailey, who had been buying horses and shipping them south, and who accidentally shot himself through the right foot two weeks ago, has died of his injuries. Bailey came here from Fort Scott. Shortly after the first of the year he took out two accident insurance policies, one in the Fidelity and Casualty company for \$5,000 and the other in the Standard company for a like amount. The latter company claims exemption under a clause which releases it if the insured is injured while in the act of violating a state law. Local representatives of the company claim that as Bailey was shot by the accidental discharge of a revolver in his pocket he was carrying a concealed weapon, and thereby violating the state law. -Atchison (Kan.) Dispatch.



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