

THE LIGHT IN THE CLEARING

A TALE OF THE NORTH COUNTRY IN THE TIME OF SILAS WRIGHT

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I Had Time to Raise My Flail and Bring It Down upon the Head of the Leader.

body and I had set out in our spring buggy with the family umbrella—a faded but sacred implement, always carefully dried, after using, and hung in the clothes press. We were drenched to the skin in spite of the umbrella. It was still raining when we arrived at the familiar door in Ashery lane. Uncle Peabody wouldn't stop.

He hurried away. We pioneers rarely stopped or even turned out for the weather.

"Come in," said the voice of the schoolmaster at the door. "There's good weather under this roof."

He saw my plight as I entered. "I'm like a shaggy dog that's been in swimming," I said.

"Open my word, boy, we're in luck," remarked the schoolmaster.

I looked up at him.

"Michael Henry's clothes—sure, they're just the thing for you!"

I followed him upstairs, wondering how it had happened that Michael Henry had clothes.

He took me into his room and brought some handsome, soft clothes out of a press with shirt, socks and boots to match.

"There, my liddle buck," said he, "put them on."

"These will soon dry on me," I said.

"Put them on—ye laggard! Michael Henry told me to give them to you. It's the birthday night of little Ruth, my boy. There's a big cake with candles and chicken pie and jellied cookies and all the like of that. Put them on. A wet boy at the feast would dampen the whole proceedings."

I put them on and with a great sense of relief and comfort. They were an admirable fit—so perfect for an accident, although at the time I thought only of their grandeur as I stood surveying myself in the looking-glass. They were of blue cloth and I saw that they went well with my blond hair and light skin. I was putting on my collar and necktie when Mr. Hacket returned.

We went below and the table was very grand with its frost-frosted cake and its candles, in shiny brass sticks, and its jellies and preserves with the gleam of polished pewter among them. Mrs. Hacket and all the children, save Ruth, were waiting for us in the dining room.

"Now sit down here, all of ye, with Michael Henry," said the schoolmaster. "The little lady will be impatient. I'll go and get her and God help us to make her remember the day."

He was gone a moment, only, when he came back with Ruth in lovely white dress and slippers and gay with ribbons, and the silver beads of Mary on her neck. We clapped our hands and cheered and, in the excitement of the moment, John tipped over his drinking glass and shattered it on the floor.

"Never mind, my brave lad—no glass ever perished in a better cause. God bless you!"

We ate and jested and talked, and the sound of our laughter drowned the cry of the wind in the chimney and the drumming of the rain upon the windows.

Next morning my clothes, which had been hung by the kitchen stove, were damp and wrinkled. Mr. Hacket came to my room before I had risen.

"Michael Henry would rather see his clothes hanging on a good boy than on a nail in the closet," said he. "Sure they give no comfort to the nail at all."

"I guess mine are dry now," I answered.

"They're wet and heavy, boy. No son of Baidur could keep a light heart in them. Sure ye'd be as much out of place as a sunbeam in a cave of bats. If ye care not for your own comfort think of the poor lad in the green chair. He's that proud and pleased to see them on ye it would be a shame to reject his offer. Sure, if they were dry yer own garments would be good enough, God knows, but Michael Henry loves the look of ye in these togs, and then the president is in town."

That evening he discovered a big stain, black as ink, on my coat and trousers. Mr. Hacket expressed the opinion that it might have come from the umbrella, but I am quite sure that he had spotted them to save me from the last homemade suit I ever wore, save in rough work, and keep Michael Henry's on my back. In any event I wore them no more save at chore time.

Sally came and went, with the Wills boy, and gave no heed to me. In her eyes I had no more substance than a ghost, it seemed to me, although I caught her, often, looking at me. I judged that her father had given her a bad report of us and had some regrets, in spite of my knowledge that we were right, although they related mostly to Amos.

Next afternoon I saw Mr. Wright and the president walking back and forth on the bridge as they talked together. A number of men stood in

front of the blacksmith shop, by the river shore, watching them, as I passed, on my way to the mill on an errand. The two statesmen were in broadcloth and white linen and beaver hats. They stopped as I approached them.

"Well, partner, we shall be leaving in an hour or so," said Mr. Wright as he gave me his hand. "You may look for me here soon after the close of the session. Take care of yourself and go often to see Mrs. Wright and obey your captain and remember me to your aunt and uncle."

"See that you keep coming, my good boy," said the president as he gave me his hand, with playful reference, no doubt, to Mr. Wright's remark that I was a coming man.

"Bart, I've some wheat to be thrashed in the barn on the back lot," said the senator as I was leaving them. "You can do it Saturdays, if you care to, at a shilling an hour. Stack the straw out of doors until you've finished, then put it back in the bay. Winnow the wheat carefully and sack it and bring it down to the granary and I'll settle with you when I return."

I remember that a number of men who worked in Grimshaw's sawmill were passing as he spoke.

"Yes, sir," I answered, much elated by the prospect of earning money.

The examination of Amos was set down for Monday and the people of the village were stirred and shaken by wild rumors regarding the evidence to be adduced. Every day men and women stopped me in the street to ask what I knew of the murder. I followed the advice of Bishop Perkins and kept my knowledge to myself.

Saturday came, and when the chores were done I went alone to the grain barn in the back lot of the senator's farm with flail and measure and broom and fork and shovel and sacks and my luncheon, in a pushcart, with all of which Mrs. Wright had provided me. It was a lonely place with woods

on three sides of the field and a road on the other. I kept laying down beds of wheat on the barn floor and beating them out with the flail until the sun was well over the roof, when I sat down to eat my luncheon. Then I swept up the grain and winnowed out the chaff and filled one of my sacks. That done, I covered the floor again and the thump of the flail ceased my loneliness until in the middle of the afternoon two of my schoolmates came and asked me to go swimming with them. The river was not forty rods away and a good trail led to the swimming hole. It was a warm, bright day and I was hot and thirsty. The thought of cool waters and friendly companionship was too much for me. I went with them and stayed with them longer than I intended. I remember saying as I dressed that I should have to work late and go without my supper in order to finish my stint.

It was almost dark when I was putting the last sack of wheat into my cart, in the gloomy barn and getting ready to go.

A rustling in the straw where I stood stopped me suddenly. I heard stealthy footsteps in the darkness. I stood my ground and demanded: "Who's there?"

"I saw a form approaching in the gloom with feet as noiseless as a cat's. I too, a step backward and, seeing that it was a woman, stopped."

"It's Kate," came in a hoarse whisper as I recognized her form and staff.

"Run, boy—they have just come out of the woods. I saw them. They will take you away, Run."

She had picked up the flail, and now she put it in my hands and gave me a push toward the door. I ran, and none too quickly, for I had not gone fifty feet from the barn in the stubble when I heard them coming after me, whoever they were. I saw that they were gaining and turned quickly. I had time to raise my flail and bring it down upon the head of the leader, who fell as I had seen a beef fall under the ax. Another man stopped beyond the reach of my flail and, after a second's hesitation, turned and ran away in the darkness.

I could hear or see no other motion in the field. I turned and ran on down the slope toward the village. In a moment I saw someone coming out of the maple grove at the field's end, just ahead, with a lantern.

Then I heard the voice of the schoolmaster saying:

"Is it you, my lad?"

"Yes," I answered, as I came up to him and Mary, in a condition of breathless excitement.

I told them of the curious adventure I had had.

"Come quick," said the schoolmaster. "Let's go back and find the man in the stubble."

I remembered that I had struck the path in my flight just before stopping to swing the flail. The man must have

fallen very near it. When we found where he had been lying and drops of fresh blood on the stubble.

"Tush," said the schoolmaster. "We listened and heard a wagon rattling at a wild pace down the road toward the river."

"There he goes," said Mr. Hacket. "His companions have carried him away. Ye'd be riding in that wagon now, yourself, my brave lad, if ye hadn't 'a' made a lousy hit with the flail—God bless ye!"

"What would they 'a' done with me?" I asked.

"Oh, I reckon they'd 'a' took ye off, lad, and kep' ye for a year or so until Amos was out of 'danger,'" said Mr. Hacket. "Maybe they'd drowned ye in the river down there an' left yer clothes on the bank to make it look like an honest drowning. The devil knows what they'd 'a' done with ye, liddle buck. We'll have to keep an eye on ye now, every day until the trial is over—sure we will. Come, we'll go up to the barn and see if Kate is there."

Just then we heard the receding wagon go roaring over the bridge on Little river. Mary shuddered with fright. The schoolmaster reassured us by saying:

"Don't be afraid. I brought my gun in case we'd meet a painter. But the danger is past."

He drew a long pistol from his coat pocket and held it in the light of the lantern.

The loaded cart stood in the middle of the barn floor, where I had left it, but old Kate had gone. We closed the barn, drawing the cart along with us. When we came into the edge of the village I began to reflect upon the strange port of out of which I had so luckily escaped. It gave me a heavy sense of responsibility and of the wickedness of men.

I thought of old Kate and her broken silence. For once I had heard her speak. I could feel my flesh tingle when I thought of her quick words and her hoarse, passionate whisper.

I knew, or thought I knew, why she took such care of me. She was in league with the gallows and could not bear to see it cheated of its prey. For some reason she hated the Grimshaws. I had seen the hate in her eyes the day she dogged along behind the old money lender through the streets of the village when her pointing finger had seemed to say to me: "There, there is the man who has brought me to this. He has put these rags upon my back, this fire in my heart, this wild look in my eyes. Wait and you will see what I will put upon him."

I knew that old Kate was not the irresponsible, witless creature that people thought her to be. I had begun to think of her with a kind of awe as one gifted above all others. One by one the things she had said of the future seemed to be coming true.

As we were going into the house the schoolmaster said:

"Now, Mary, you take this lantern and go across the street to the house of Deacon Binks, the constable. You'll find him asleep by the kitchen stove. Arrest his slumbers, but not rudely, and, when he has come to, tell him that I have news of the devil."

Deacon Binks arrived, a fat man with a big, round body and a very wise and serious countenance between side whiskers bending from his temple to his neck and suggesting parentheses of hair, as if his head and its accessories were in the nature of a side issue. He and the schoolmaster went out of doors and must have talked together while I was eating a bowl of bread and milk which Mrs. Hacket had brought to me.

When I went to bed, by and by, I heard somebody snoring on the little porch under my window. The first sound that reached my ear at the break of dawn was the snoring of some sleeper. I dressed and went below and found the constable in his coonskin overcoat asleep on the porch with a long-barreled gun at his side. While I stood there the schoolmaster came around the corner of the house from the garden. He put his hand on the deacon's shoulder and gave him a little shake.

"Awake, ye limb o' the law," he demanded. "Prayer is better than sleep."

The deacon arose and stretched himself and cleared his throat and assumed an air of alertness and said it was—

the sky being overcast and the air dark and chilly. Mr. Hacket removed his greatcoat and threw it on the stoop saying:

"Deacon, you lay there. From now on I'm constable and ready for any act that may be necessary to maintain the law. I can be as severe as Napoleon Bonaparte and as cunning as Satan, if I have to be."

While I was milking the deacon sat on a bucket in the doorway of the stable and snored until I had finished. He awoke when I loosed the cow and the constable went back to the pasture with me, yawning with his hand over his mouth much of the way. The deacon leaned his elbow on the top of the pen and snored again, lightly, while I mixed the feed for the pigs.

Mr. Hacket met us at the kitchen door, where Deacon Binks said to him: "If you'll look after the boy today I'll go home and get a little rest."

"God bless yer soul, ye had a busy night," said the schoolmaster with a smile.

He added as he went into the house: "I never knew a man to rest with more energy and persistence. It was a perfect flood of rest. It kept me awake until long after midnight."

CHAPTER XI.

The Spirit of Michael Henry and Others.

At the examination of Amos Grimshaw my knowledge was committed to the records and ceased to be a source of danger to me. Grimshaw came to the village that day. On my way to



"Awake, Ye Limb o' the Law."

the courtroom I saw him walking slowly, with bent head as I had seen him before, followed by old Kate. She carried her staff in her left hand while the forefinger of her right hand was pointing him out. Silent as a ghost and as unheeded—one would say—she followed his steps.

I observed that old Kate sat on a front seat with her hand to her ear and Grimshaw beside his lawyer at a big table and that when she looked at him her lips moved in a strange unuttered whisper of her spirit. Her face filled with joy as one damning detail after another came out in the evidence.

The facts herebefore alleged, and others, were proved, for the tracks fitted the shoes of Amos. The young man was held and presently indicted. The time of his trial was not determined.

I wrote a good hand those days and the leading merchant of the village engaged me to post his books every Saturday at ten cents an hour. Thenceforward until Christmas I gave my free days to that task. I estimated the sum that I should earn and planned to divide it in equal parts and proudly present it to my aunt and uncle on Christmas day.

One Saturday while I was at work on the big ledger of the merchant I ran upon this item:

October 2—S. Wright—To one suit of clothes for Michael Henry from measures furnished by S. Robinson to match \$4.30
Shirts to match 1.70

I knew then the history of the suit of clothes which I had worn since that rainy October night, for I remembered that Sam Robinson, the tailor, had measured me at our house and made up the cloth of Aunt Deel's weaving.

I observed, also, that numerous articles—a load of wood, two sacks of flour, three pairs of boots, one coat, ten pounds of salt pork and four bushels of potatoes—all for "Michael Henry"—had been charged to Silas Wright.

So by the merest chance I learned that the invisible "Michael Henry" was the almoner of the modest statesman and really the spirit of Silas Wright feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and warming the cold house, in the absence of its owner. It was the heart of Wright joined to that of the schoolmaster, which sat in the green chair.

I fear that my work suffered a moment's interruption, for just then I began to know the great heart of the senator. Its warmth was in the clothing that covered my back, its delicacy in the ignorance of those who had shared its benefactions.

I count this one of the great events of my youth. But there was a greater one, although it seemed not so at the time of it. A traveler on the road to Ballybeen had dropped his pocketbook containing a large amount of money—\$2,700 was the sum, if I remember

rightly. He was a man who, justly suspicious of the banks, had withdrawn his money. Posters announced the loss and the offer of a large reward. The village was profoundly stirred by them. Searching parties went up the road stirring its dust and groping in its grass and briars for the great prize which was supposed to be lying there. It was said, however, that the quest had been unsuccessful. So the lost pocketbook became a treasured mystery of the village and of all the hills and valleys toward Ballybeen—a topic of old wives and gabbling husbands at the fireside for unnumbered years.

By and by the fall term of school ended, Uncle Peabody came down to get me the day before Christmas. I had enjoyed my work and my life at the Hackets', on the whole, but I was glad to be going home again. My uncle was in high spirits and there were many packages in the sleigh.

"A merry Christmas to ye both an' may the Lord love ye!" said Mr. Hacket as he bade us goodby. "Every day our thoughts will be going up the hills to your house."

The bells rang merrily as we hurried through the swamp in the hard snow paths.

"We're goin' to move," said my uncle presently. "We've agreed to get out by the middle of May."

"How does that happen?" I asked.

"I settled with Grimshaw and agreed to go. If it hadn't 'a' been for Wright and Baldwin we wouldn't 'a' got a cent. They threatened to bid against him at the sale. So he settled. We're goin' to have a new home. We've bought a hundred an' fifty acres from Abe Leonard. Goin' to build a new house in the spring. It will be nearer the village."

He playfully nudged my ribs with his elbow.

"We've had a little good luck, Bart," he went on. "I'll tell ye what it is if you won't say anything about it."

I promised.

"I dunno as it would matter much," he continued, "but I don't want to do any braggin'. It ain't anybody's business, anyway. An old uncle over in Vermont died three weeks ago and left us thirty-eight hundred dollars."

It was old Uncle Ezra Baynes of Hinesburg. Died without a chick or child. Your aunt and me slipped down to Potsdam an' took the stage an' went over an' got the money. It was more money than I ever see before in my life. We put it in the bank in Potsdam to keep it out of Grimshaw's hands. I wouldn't trust that man as far as you could throw a bull by the tail."

It was a cold, clear night, and when we reached home the new stove was snapping with the heat in its firebox and the pudding puffing in the pot and old Shep dreaming in the chimney corner. Aunt Deel gave me a hug at the door. She barked and leaped to my shoulders.

"Why, Bart! You're growin' like a weed—ain't ye?—ayes ye be," my aunt said as she stood and looked at me. "Set right down here an' warm ye—ayes!—I've done all the chores—ayes!"

How warm and comfortable was the dear old room with those beloved faces in it. I wonder if paradise itself can seem more pleasant to me. I have had the best food this world can provide. In my time, but never anything that I ate with a keener relish than the pudding and milk and bread and butter and cheese and pumpkin pie which Aunt Deel gave us that night.

Supper over, I wiped the dishes for my aunt while Uncle Peabody went out to feed and water the horses. Then we sat down in the genial warmth while I told the story of my life in "the busy town," as they called it. What pride and attention they gave me then!

My fine clothes and the story of how I had come by them taxed my ingenuity somewhat, although not improperly. I had to be careful not to let them know that I had been ashamed of the homemade suit. They somehow felt the truth about it and a little silence followed the story. Then Aunt Deel drew her chair near me and touched my hair very gently and looked into my face without speaking.

"Ayes! I know," she said presently, in a kind of caressing tone, with a touch of sadness in it. "They ain't used to coarse homespun stuff down there in the village. They made fun of ye—didn't they, Bart?"

"I don't care about that," I assured them. "The mind's the measure of the man," I quoted, remembering the lines the Senator had repeated to me.

"That's sound!" Uncle Peabody exclaimed with enthusiasm.

Aunt Deel took my hand in hers and surveyed it thoughtfully for a moment without speaking.

"You ain't goin' to have to suffer that way no more," she said in it low tone. "We're goin' to be more comfortable—ayes. Yer uncle thought we better go West, but I couldn't bear to go off so far an' leave mother an' father an' sister Susan an' all the folks we loved layin' here in the ground alone—I want to lay down with 'em by an' by an' wait for the sound of the trumpet—ayes!—mebbe it'll be for thousands of years—ayes!"

To our astonishment the clock struck twelve.

"Hurrah! It's merry Christmas!" said Uncle Peabody as he jumped to his feet and began to sing of the little Lord Jesus.

We joined him while he stood beating time with his right hand after the fashion of a singing master.

"Off with yer boots, friend!" he exclaimed when the stanza was finished. "We don't have to set up and watch like the shepherds."

We drew our boots on the chair round with hands clasped over the

knee—how familiar is the process, and yet I haven't seen it in more than half a century! I lighted a candle and scampered upstairs in my stocking feet, Uncle Peabody following close and slapping my thigh as if my pace were not fast enough for him. In the midst of our skylarking the candle tumbled to the floor and I had to go back to the stove and relight it.

How good it seemed to be back in the old room under the shingles! The heat of the stovepipe had warmed its hospitality.

"It's been kind of lonesome here," said Uncle Peabody as he opened the window. "I always let the wind come in to keep me company—it gits so warm."

"Ye can't look at yer stockin' yet," said Aunt Deel when I came downstairs about eight o'clock, having slept through chore time. I remember it was the delicious aroma of frying ham and buckwheat cakes which awoke me; and who wouldn't rise and shake off the cloak of slumber on a bright, cold winter morning with such provocation!

"This ain't no common Christmas—I tell ye," Aunt Deel went on. "Santa Claus won't git here short of noon I wouldn't wonder—ayes!"

About eleven o'clock Uncle Hiram and Aunt Eliza and their five children arrived with loud and merry greetings. Then came other aunts and uncles and cousins. With what noisy good cheer the men entered the house after they had put up their horses! I remember how they laid their hard, heavy hands on my head and shook it a little as they spoke of my "stretchin' up" or gave me a playful slap on the shoulder—an ancient token of good will—the first form of the accolade, I fancy. What joyful good humor there was in those simple men and women—enough to temper the woes of a city if it could have been applied to their relief. They stood thick around the stove warming themselves and taking off its griddles and opening its doors and surveying it inside and out with much curiosity.

"Now for the Christmas tree," said Uncle Peabody as he led the way into our best room, where a fire was burning in the old Franklin grate. "Come on, boys an' girls."

What a wonderful sight was the Christmas tree—the first we had had in our house—a fine spreading balsam loaded with presents! Uncle Hiram jumped into the air and clapped his feet together and shouted: "Hold me, somebody, or I'll grab the bull tree an' run away with it!"

Uncle Jabez held one foot in both hands before him and joyfully hopped around the tree.

These relatives had brought their family gifts, some days before, to be hung on its branches. The thing that caught my eye was a big silver watch hanging by a long golden chain to one of the boughs. Uncle Peabody took it

down and held it aloft by the chain, so that none should miss the sight, saying:

"From Santa Claus for Bart!"

A murmur of admiration ran through

the company which gathered around me as I held the treasure in my trembling hands.

"This is for Bart, too," Uncle Peabody shouted as he took down a bolt of soft blue cloth and laid it in my arms. "Now there's somethin' that's just about as slick as a kitten's ear. Feel of it. It's for a suit of clothes. Come all the way from Burlington. Now get-up there. You've got yer load."

I moved out of the way in a hurricane of merriment. It was his one great day of pride and vanity. He did not try to conceal them.

The other presents floated for a moment in this irresistible tide of laughing good will and found their owners. I have never forgotten how Uncle Jabez chased Aunt Minerva around the house with a wooden snake cunningly carved and colored. I observed there were many things on the tree which had not been taken down when we younger ones gathered up our wealth and repaired to Aunt Deel's room to feast our eyes upon it and compare our good fortune.

The women and the big girls rolled up their sleeves and went to work with Aunt Deel preparing the dinner. The great turkey and the chicken pie were made ready and put in the oven and the potatoes and the onions and the winter squash were soon boiling in their pots on the stove-top. Meanwhile the children were playing in my

aunt's bedroom and Uncle Hiram and Uncle Jabez were pulling sticks in a corner while the other men sat tipped against the wall watching and making playful comments—all save my Uncle Peabody, who was trying to touch his head to the floor and then straighten up with the aid of the broomstick.

In the midst of it Aunt Deel opened the front door and old Kate, the Silent Woman, entered. To my surprise, she wore a decent-looking dress of gray homespun cloth and a white cloud looped over her head and ears and tied around her neck and a good pair of boots.

"Merry Christmas!" we all shouted.

She smiled and nodded her head and sat down in the chair which Uncle Peabody had placed for her at the stove side. Aunt Deel took the cloud off her head while Kate drew her mittens—newly knitted of the best yarn. Then my aunt brought some stockings and a shawl from the tree and laid them on the lap of old Kate. What a silence fell upon us as we saw tears coursing down the cheeks of this lonely old woman of the countryside—tears of joy, doubtless, for God knows how long it had been since the poor, abandoned soul had seen a merry Christmas and shared its kindness. I did not fail to observe how clean her face and hands looked! She was greatly changed.

She took my hand as I went to her side and tenderly caressed it. A gentler smile came to her face than ever I had seen upon it. The old stern look returned for a moment as she held one finger aloft in a gesture which only I and my Aunt Deel understood. We knew it signified a peril and a mystery. That I should have to meet it, somewhere up the hidden pathway, I had no doubt whatever.

"Dinner's ready!" exclaimed the cheerful voice of Aunt Deel.

Then what a stirring of chairs and feet as we sat down at the table. Old Kate sat by the side of my aunt and we were all surprised at her good manners.

We jested and laughed and drank elder and retold the year's history and ate as only they may eat who have big bones and muscles and the vitality of oxen. I never taste the flavor of sage and currant jelly or hear a hearty laugh without thinking of those holiday dinners in the old log house on Rattlesroad.

That Christmas brought me nothing better than those words, the memory of which is one of the tallest towers in that long avenue of my past down which I have been looking those many days. About all you can do for a boy, worth while, is to give him something good to remember.

The day had turned dark. The temperature had risen and the air was dank and chilly. The men began to hitch up their horses.

So, one by one, the sleighs left us with cheery good-bys and a grind-

ing of runners and a jingling of bells. When the last had gone Uncle Peabody and I went into the house. Aunt Deel sat by the stove, old Kate by the window looking out at the falling dusk. How still the house seemed!

"There's one thing I forgot," I said as I proudly took out of my wallet the six one-dollar bills which I had earned by working Saturdays and handed three of them to my aunt and three to my uncle, saying:

"That is my Christmas present to you. I earned it myself."

I remember so well their astonishment and the trembling of their hands and the look of their faces.

"It's grand—ayes!" Aunt Deel said in a low tone.

She rose in a moment and beckoned to me and my uncle. We followed her through the open door to the other room.

"I'll tell ye what I'd do," she whispered. "I'd give 'em to 'ol' Kate—ayes! She's goin' to stay with us till tomorrow."

"Good idee!" said Uncle Peabody.

So I took the money out of their hands and went in and gave it to the Silent Woman.

"That's your present from me," I said.

How can I forget how she held my arm against her with that loving, familiar, rocking motion of a woman who is soothing a baby at her breast and kissed my coat sleeve? She released my arm and, turning to the window, leaned her head upon its sill and shook with sobs. The dusk