

grasp the handle of a kitchen knife as a soldier grasps his sword; who dress a goose with the solemn air of a priest examining the sacred entrails, beating an omelette with the majesty of Xerxes beating the sea; who turn gray under their inevitable cotton caps and would like in dying to grasp the handle of a frying pan as the people of India so they say, grasp the tail of a cow.

There are no more of these men.

As for Martha, the fruit-seller, she was a good simple woman, but still, as good as she was, not quite daft about it (as folks say sometimes) but in a way spirited. Yes, indeed, she found sometimes in her heart the way of saying passionate, touching things that Monsieur de Voltaire himself, the great man of his time, might never have found under his wig.

There are still a few of such women.

It was in the first year class in French.

The class was crowded, for the room was small and the class was large. The aisles were filled with chairs and up in front were a row of chairs around the professor's desk. In the most conspicuous place sat a girl with red hair, such bright red hair that half the class when they recited fixed their eyes on her in the hope, perhaps, that the hairs brilliancy might throw some light on their puzzled brains.

The recitation began. First they pronounced the day's vocabulary, a list of adjectives and a list of nouns, class had already had the phrases for "it is" and "I have." Today the professor asked the translation of the various combinations of these phrases with nouns and adjectives. All went well till it came to the turn of the red-haired girl. The teacher read off the French and then a name from the card on the top of the pile.

The red-haired girl smiled a little and translated:

"I have a white horse; it is a very white horse."

They sat in the twilight, these two, and said their prayers. When they were young they had read these same prayers, the prayers for the first Sunday in Lent, out of their prayer-books. They had given the pretty leather bound books to each other on their wedding day. Now the leather binding was worn by much handling. Their children had used them and their grandchildren.

But now they had no need of prayer-books. So many times they had read these on Sunday evenings that the words came easily to their lips. The fire burned cheerfully in the little stove; the mantle clock ticked peacefully; and the old man and woman sat near the table, she rocking quietly with her hands folded in her lap, he leaning forwards with his elbows on his knees. He did not seem to notice that he lagged a little in reciting; she would wait for him at the end of each sentence and they could begin together again.

So they said their prayers, mindful of the words and of each other.

Anton Christianson sat on the doorstep of the little sod house where he and his brother lived together. Anton had washed the supper dishes alone tonight for Carl had gone down to the village. But there had not been many dishes, just for two, and Anton could have the whole evening to think. So an hour ago he had brought out his violin and his pipe and had seated himself by the door.

Now his violin lay on his knee; the pipe in his mouth had gone out long ago. The rustle of the cottonwood leaves in the tree by the door, the grunting of the pigs behind the house, the shouts of the neighbors as they drove their cattle in, hardly touched Anton at all. The last light of the sun

was out enough to brighten up his face and his steady eyes looking out over the priaries saw nothing of light or darkness or earth. He was thinking.

And he had every reason to think, for Anton's brother had gone to see the girl who was to have been Anton's wife.

They sit together, old, shut out from the real action of the world. His hair is white and the veins show blue through his wrinkled red skin. She is younger. She rocks back and forth very gently lest the rocking move too much the book she reads. Her voice is low and tells by the graveness how much of its old sweetness has been lost. But he does not know that the sweetness is gone. He listens without thinking of the voice. The story is strong—an old pathetic tale of the Scotch Covenanters.

The voice of the reader goes gently on. The rocking stops and slowly the old man lifts his hand to hide his eyes. Then for a long time the reading is kept up. But there comes a break in the voice. The old man has both hands before his eyes now.

The reader stops short for a moment, gazing intently at the blurred pages before her. She has finished the death of the Covenanter's son.

The call to noonday prayers rang out from the high minaret of the mosque. Three times to the north the call went forth and to the east and to the south and to the west. Shrill and high it sounded piercing the quivering heated air and penetrating the shops of a seller of sweetcakes down in a by-street.

Before the shop a dignitary knelt to pray. But within the shop the keeper stood erect, his turban pressed low over his forehead. Long ago he had lost his belief in Allah and the prophets. But he had prayed whenever the call had rang out from the mosque. He was old now and it would be hard to stand against his friends. But he would kneel no more towards Mecca, not again except his heart prayed too. His old habit would be hard to break; men would curse him—after all—but no—

So he stood in his narrow shop while men outside knelt down. The muscles of his face jerked painfully, he gritted his teeth and clenched his hands—but he stood erect.

It was at church. The choir was giving some sort of concert. Sometimes all would stand up and sing, sometimes four, sometimes two and sometimes one. Towards the last the alto sang a solo. She was evidently a western girl for she made all her "a" sounds flat. The soprano had been imported direct from the east so she no doubt heard the flat "a's" with some contempt. But she smiled when the alto finished and said something that must have been complimentary for the alto went through the pantomime of a "thank you."

Then the two rose to give a duet: "He shall lead them like a shepherd and shall carry them in his arms."

They began together and went smoothly through the first clause. Their voices rose and blended and sank. Then the alto started out bravely by herself.

"And carry them—"

The soprano interrupted.—

"Ahnd cahrry them."

The alto was obstinate.

"Aand cairy them," she answered with spirit.

The soprano broke in before the last word was well out of the alto's mouth. This time she held the offending word, trilled it and came down on a triumphant slide.

The alto was quieted.

She came in meekly on the last phrase.

"In his arms," they sang, and sat back in their places contentedly.

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