

## STORIES IN PASSING.

He was a boy of fifteen, a light-haired, bright-eyed fellow, who had spent his entire life in the city; so when a friend invited the family out to his farm and the family accepted, the boy's heart was glad. The friend of the family had a son about the same age and the two boys were on the go from daylight to sunset—in the hay field or the orchard, down at the creek, or hunting upland plover in the meadows.

"Ride him down to the tank," said the friend's son, bringing out his pony one morning. Now the pony was a cattle pony and an animal of that kind is full of surprises and little tricks of starting and stopping suddenly. But the boy from the city did not know this and mounted the pony, caught the halter and dug his heels into the animal's sides.

Like a shot the cattle-pony started for the big round tank at the end of the yard. The halter was of no use in holding him and the boy on his back thought the animal intended a clear leap of the tank, twenty feet in diameter. So he let go his hold on the rope and clutched at the pony's mane and held his breath.

That animal went on like a rushing train straight to the very edge of the tank. Then it gave a little jump into the air and came down stiff with its four legs rigid as iron, its head down and its back arched, in the attitude of bracing for the jerk of the lasso over a steer's horns.

Nothing could save the boy riding horseback. The shock sent him headlong into the air and then sprawling into the tank of water, and when he pulled himself out wet and sore and sputtering, he still held a bunch of the pony's mane clasped tightly in his hand.

She lives here in Lincoln, a pale-faced little woman, with deep set lines about her mouth and a dull dead light in her eyes. She is never idle and above all, has no time for talking. At least that is the excuse she gives when folks ask her why she is so quiet. But those who know the drama of her life know she has reasons of her own.

Years ago she lived back in Eastern Iowa and at her home-town loved, and was engaged to a certain young man with whom she had grown up. Then she went back east somewhere to school where they filled her head full of a lot of things that in those days were supposed to constitute a finished lady. By and by he came to see her there at school and she was a little ashamed of his rather rough western ways and lack of polish. She couldn't help showing it just a little, as much as she loved him, and his pride was touched. A coolness sprang up then, a something that neither could understand nor very well overcome; and then he went to Ann Arbor where he worked so hard that there was little time for letters. While he went abroad they drifted so far apart that when the son of her father's partner offered his hand and pressed his suit so urgently, she accepted and came west to live.

Her real lover spent five years in Europe and then came back to a chair in his alma mater and is now president of one of the leading universities of New England.

Her husband proved a failure and when their fathers' firm went up, he ran away, leaving her with nothing but the children to look after. So now she sews and does fancy work to get along and teaches the children as best she can and is strangely silent while the lines about her mouth grow deeper and the light of her eyes fainter and fainter.

"Z-zp—boom!"

A sudden gleam lighted up the hill of the little town, showing a sight as of some fantastic carnival. The black mass

of people seemed to sway a moment unsteadily and then break into a mad run down the hill, stumbling and falling over each other and across sidewalks and lawns. Then there was another fitful glare and a miniature volcano broke loose, crackling and sizzling and sputtering in childish glee. Rockets were shooting in every direction, darting into the crowd and circling along the ground and ploughing up the sod and smashing into glass windows. Giant crackers exploded with deafening reports and showered sparks on all sides. Roman candles were zigzagging across each other's path. Gigantic pin-wheels and indescribable "pieces" were whirling and snorting and plunging amid a rain of fire which fell in sparks and sheets and balls of various colors. And above all lights of red and green and blue and purple flared up and gave the scene the appearance of a devil's jubilee.

For a man had dropped a match into the fireworks for the evening's entertainment of that town, and in ten minutes five hundred dollars had gone up in fire and smoke.

One does not realize perhaps how well lighted the city of Lincoln really is until he sees it at night from some eminence, such as the capitol dome or the hills to the east or west of the city. The best view, no doubt, is that from one point of the road coming in from Cushman park—the summit of the last hill just before dropping down into the valley of the salt basin. Here all of a sudden the whole city comes before one, a lake of light points across the darkness between. For several miles they extend in parallel rows from north to south, beginning with a single light at the northern end and steadily growing more numerous until you can plainly distinguish O street by its double brightness, and then tapering out again to the single point far to the south and high above all, the four lights at the capitol look down like some watchful beacon over the city. Here and there a single arc or perhaps a whole row or circuit dies away for a moment, leaving that portion of the city in darkness, and flash forth again. Or if you are a little late in coming in, you may be able to see them all go out, commencing with those far to the north and south and gradually working in towards the city—the light dying away to a pencil of red, glowing uncertainly a second and then going out in darkness. Then darkness has fully taken the city to itself and the night is any one's.

Ten or twelve years ago there were half a dozen young men in Lincoln—all of family and position and influence now and too busy for such things as they once did—who every summer spent a month at a certain farm down near Nebraska City, where they fished, boated, lounged about, played jokes and had a good time generally. One summer they were down at the farm as usual and expecting a friend from the city the next day thought best to mention the fact to their host.

"Our friend Murphy will be down tomorrow," they said, "he couldn't come with us on account of some extra church work. You see he's a minister—a good fellow enough when you know him but pretty straight and not so easy and free as the rest of us chaps here. So you want to treat him pretty careful, you know—no cigars or liquor or anything of that kind—he's pretty sensitive on such things. We know how to handle him and you just watch us. And whatever you do don't give us away."

Murphy came down the next day, a tall, lank, solemn-faced young fellow but with an eye that might imply almost anything. The farmer met him at the train in the spring wagon and all the way out the farmer talked pleasantly of the weather, and the crops and the high moral tone of the neighborhood

and what excellent fellows were his friends who were boarding at his farm. Murphy listened to it all and said little, wondering to what kind of a place the boys had come.

They arrived just at noon and he was greeted cordially but with serious faces by his friends. Then they sat down to dinner and he noticed that they were all subdued and very quiet and kept watching the farmer. He also noticed that there was nothing to drink on the table but ice water, and he made a mental note to find out later why they had come to such a place.

Then the farmer broke the silence by asking Murphy to ask grace. Murphy looked bewilderingly at all the grave faces of his friends and then burst out:

"No. I may be good all the rest of the year at home but I'll be damned if I came down here to attend a camp-meeting. What's come over you fellows anyhow—you look like a lot of deacons. And why don't you trot out something to drink? I'm as dry as a Dutchman and nothing here but water. What in thunder's the matter with you chaps—you're not generally carrying about such sanctimonious wigs as this."

And the others dropped the joke and laughed but it took the farmer all their stay to get over the shock.

H. G. SHEDD,

## London Letter.

At one of the banquets, last week, the Queen appeared in a truly gorgeous gown, by far the gayest she has worn for forty years or so. Her guests were all astonished and delighted to see the venerable lady in a really regal frock for once. It was of richest black moire, embroidered all over the front of the bodice and skirt with gold inlaid with jewels, the design representing lotus flowers (the lotus is the emblem of the colonies) forget-me-nots and wheat ears. Every one admired the exquisite work, but the dear old lady's festal garb ceased to be a source of wonder when it was made known that the embroidery was executed at Agra, and that the Queen, after thinking what she could do to help her poor famine-stricken Indian subjects, had hit upon the idea of setting the fashion for Indian gold work. No doubt our smart people will now proceed to adopt it.

You will like to hear a little about the presents the Queen has had. The diamond brooch from the Princess of Wales and her children consists of one large oval brilliant, surrounded by smaller ones, and showing no setting. She wore it on Jubilee Day, and very splendid it looked. The married sons and daughters, headed by Saxe-Coburgs, gave a chain of sixty diamond links—a happy idea—having in the center of all the Imperial crown. The pearl and diamond brooch from the household is fine, too. One of the most interesting gifts is the Empress of China's picture, painted by herself. It represents a view of rocks and sandy shore, having many red-crested storks about. Now the meaning of all this is subtle. The stork with the red crest is the emblem of long life, as it is only supposed to acquire that ornament when it is 1,000 years old, and it also typifies parental love. The entire meaning of the work is, "May you live a thousand years, and may your children be as numerous as the sands of the sea." The Empress is a strong-minded female, and considers herself and Queen Victoria the most remarkable women of the day.

I hear that Her Majesty has shown special respect to the Papal envoy, and that, when he presented the Pope's autograph letter to her, she rose from her throne in token of reverence. Monsignor Sambucetti is a handsome man and very polished. By the way, it is an amusing fact that his presence in the procession was illegal; all diplomatic intercourse between the Vatican and the Court of

St. James is cut off by act of Parliament, and though many bills to reverse this have been introduced, they have never been carried. But Leo XIII is a clever man, and did not see why his personal friendship for the Queen and for our country should be blocked by an old statute; so, when he became Pope, he didn't waste time in sending to ask whether he might appoint an envoy; he simply dispatched the courtly Ruffo Scilla as his representative, taking it for granted that he would be received. Of course the envoy was received, and there the matter ended. Now the Pope's ambassador takes his place in England, as a matter of course, and even the most bigoted person does not dare raise a protest.

The Honors' List caused much growling. The Lord Mayor openly vows that he "expected more." Altogether Lord Salisbury has not given universal satisfaction.

The Queen's garden-party was a great event. Five thousand guests were present, and the gardens looked lovely. Once inside them, you would never dream that you were in the heart of London; and the lake is so pretty, brightened with the Queen's barges and the boatmen in their picturesque get-up. Her Majesty had a good deal of white about her gown chiefly white chiffon, for which she has a great fancy. She drove among her guests in a low victoria; and afterward took tea in the tent in perfectly homely fashion, sitting in whole view of every one, with a big white serviette spread over her lap, a typical old lady, sipping her tea and beaming! All the royalties were there; space forbids me to mention their frocks; but the Grand Duchess Serge, the Grand Duchess of Hesse and Princess Maud were the beauties. The Duchess of Marlborough's delicate pale green and white costume, with hat to match, was a big success; so was Lady Dudley's "ross-frock" in silken muslin. Lady Henry Somerset looked sweet in black and steel; the young Duchess of Newcastle did not look so nice as usual; and the Lord Mayor's people were "all over the place." The Bancrofts were much congratulated on the knighthood bestowed upon Sir Squire. Diamond ornaments were freely worn on bonnets and hats; nearly every woman sported a pearl necklace; boleros were general; and—I am thankful to add—soft tints were universally worn. None of the early Victorian colors, with which we have been threatened, appeared, nor did the poke bonnet; indeed, pretty little toques were almost the only wear.

Somebody has discovered a blue orchid! It is to be called "Dendrobium Victoria Regina," in honor of the Jubilee year.

I must not forget to tell you about the Princess of Wales' dinners for the poor. She could not manage to visit more than three of the gatherings, but she chose the poorest centers. Clerkenwell, Holborn and the Peoples' Palace. She made herself so pretty, in a light silk frock covered with bouquets of pansies, and frill upon frill of soft peach-mauve chiffon. No wonder the poor folks were charmed! She took the Prince and her daughters with her, and they all went about among the ragged crowds shaking hands and chatting with freedom that soon made everybody at ease. You would have liked the groan of satisfaction that arose when she walked into the Clerkenwell dining-hall. "Why, she's actually a-coming amongst us!" said one man open-mouthed; and come she did, to such good purpose that the rough flower-girls started chatting to her as though they had known her all their lives; and one old Irishwoman, when asked if she had enjoyed it, patted her on the back with such a grimy hand, and said:

"I have that—God bless you, my dear!" "Aint she lovely?" quoth a flower-girl. "My, she's a real lady. An' I tell yer wot—she might walk down the New