

THE PIECE THAT WAS LOST.

It was a midsummer morning. The grass was waiting for the scythe, but after breakfast Silas Rogers took down the old bible that had been his mother's daily companion for over eighty years, and they sat reverently down to worship. The reading was that tender lesson of the wandering sheep, and the lost piece of silver, and ended with the heavenly rejoicing "over the sinner that repenteth."

Mrs. Rogers looked at her. She was a tall and not uncomely woman of about thirty, but with something indefinably evil about her face. The hard mouth, the bold, defiant eyes, repelled her, yet it seemed as if at any instant they might break into scornful tears.

"Who are you?" asked the good wife coming nearer, with a pan of bread in her hand. Again the face darkened and lightened, grew hard and yielding, with the sudden declaration, "I am the piece that was lost."

Martha Rogers had not a particle of poetry in her nature, but she had the most profound reverence for the Scripture, therefore the words both puzzled and shocked her. But she was not the woman to refuse bread to the hungry; so she placed food upon the table, and motioned the woman to a chair, saying, "Set up and eat."

All the time that the woman was eating—and she did not hasten—her eyes followed the mistress and Hetty, the bright young daughter, until Martha Rogers grew nervous and sent Hetty to "red up the chambers."

"Will you give me work to do?" she demanded rather than asked.

"Who are you?" asked Mrs. Rogers again, simply to gain time.

"I thought you knew, I am Moll Pritchard; they have turned me out of my house, burned it over my head," and her eyes grew lurid.

"What can you do?" asked Mrs. Rogers.

"Anything that a woman can do, or a man. I can work in the field with the best of them; I have done it many a time; but I should like to do what—to be like other women."

"Are you a good woman?"

The question came straight and strong, without any faltering. She had heard of this Moll Pritchard, a woman who lived alone in a tumble-down hut below the sawmill, and won a meager living by weaving rag carpets, picking berries for sale, and it was suspected in less reputable ways; but Martha Rogers took no stock in idle rumors. If she had not the divine compassion, she had something like divine justice, which is altogether a sweeter thing in its remembering of our frame "than the tender mercies of the wicked."

The woman looked at her curiously—at first with a mocking smile, then with a sullen, and at last with a defiant expression.



"I AM THE PIECE THAT WAS LOST."

"Is it likely?" she said fiercely. "A good woman! How should I be a good woman? I tell you, I'm the piece that was lost, and nobody ever looked for me. If I was a good woman, do you suppose I should be where I be—only 28 years old, well and hearty, and every door in the world shut in my face? I tell you the man who wrote that story didn't know women; they don't hunt for the piece that's lost; they just let it go. There's enough of them and don't get lost."

Poor Martha Rogers was sorely perplexed, all the more that her way had lain so smooth and plain before her that she might have walked into it blindly. If she was a lost piece of silver, it was not she who lost it; but what if it were the Master's, precious to his heart, and a careless hand dropped it and left it to lie in the dust? And what if he bade her to seek it, and find it for him? Should she dare refuse? On this very day, when she needed so surely the help which she had so looked for in vain, had not this woman been sent to her very door, and was it not a plain leading of Providence? It is a blessed thing for us that we are usually driven to act first and theorize afterward, even though the after-thought sometimes brings repentance. The bread was ready for the oven and the woodbox empty.

"You may fetch in some wood," said Martha Rogers, and the woman promptly obeyed, filling the box with one load of her sinewy arms, and then stood humbly waiting. Hetty came in to the kitchen and began to clear the table, but her mother said, "Go upstairs and fetch a big apron and one of our sewing caps, and see if you can finish up your dress."

bounding with the unexpected release, and the mother turned again to the woman, furnished her with a coarse towel, and sent her to the wash house for a thorough purification. Half an hour afterward, with her hair hidden in the muslin cap, her whole figure enveloped in the calico apron, a comely woman was silently engaged in household tasks, doing her work with such rapidity and skill that the housewife drew a sigh of relief.

"There's a handful of towels and coarse clothes left from the ironing; you might put the irons on, Mary, and smooth 'em out."

The woman turned a startled face upon her, and then went quickly for the clothes; but something—was it a tear?—rolled down her swarthy cheeks, mingling with the bright drops she sprinkled over them. When had she ever heard anything but Moll? Not since among New Hampshire hills a pale woman had lain her hands upon the tangled curls of her little daughter and prayed that some one would watch over these wayward feet, lest they should go astray. It made Moll shudder to think of it. What did she know about joy in heaven over one sinner and repenteth?

Silas Rogers listened to the day's story as he sat mending a bit of harness with clumsy fingers, and among his other thoughts he grasped the idea that his wife had secured a valuable and much-needed helper.

"It seems a risk to run," said Martha, anxiously, "and I don't know but it's presumptuous; there's Hetty and there's Reuben—"

"And there's the Lord," said Silas, stopping to open his knife.

"Yes," said Martha, with a little start, "and I quite can't get rid of what she said about the 'piece that was lost,' though, to be sure, the woman that lost it ought to hunt it."

"She never does; folks are always losing things for somebody else to find; 'tain't many of them can say, 'Those that thou hast given me I have kept,' right straight along."

"But if you lose your own piece looking after other folk's—"

"Well, there's the risks, as you say, but I'd rather take a risk for the Lord than agin' him."

Martha Rogers took the risk for the Lord, and he abundantly justified and rewarded her faith. For the piece that was lost becomes "my piece" to the heart that finds it again in the Master's hand; and looking the story of the wanderer in her own breast, it was only to the angels that she said, "Rejoice with me."

And when years afterward the woman herself said before the committee of the church, "I am the woman over whom there is a great joy in heaven," there was not wanting those who thought she was presumptuously claiming to be a saint.—Emily Huntington Miller.

A Good Advertising Medium.

A glance in an Atlanta book store yesterday made this striking truth stand forth:

Death is sometimes a big advertisement.

In no department of human effort do men put forth such terrific energy as in their attempts to catch the public eye. Men rack their brain for ingenious schemes to attract public attention. The good advertiser is the rarest and richest of successes.

But some times all the cleverness and ingenuity of these brain workers are beaten—and unexpectedly.

Du Maurier's death last week was an advertisement for Harper Bros. which no idea they might dig out of their brains could excel. It has started a great rush after last month's Harper's, which contained the first installment of "The Martian." Du Maurier's new story, and a third edition of the number is now being fast exhausted. Those who cannot find the magazine are investing in "Peter Ibbetson," and if there happen to be any who have not read "Tribby" they invest in that. The book dealers will tell you that in the past four days there has been a wonderful demand for Du Maurier's works.

This great author who has added thousands to the coffers of the Harpers by his life, is adding thousands to their profits by the mere fact of his death.—Atlanta Constitution.

The Spirit of Modern Athens.

Modern Athens, which recalls in so many ways the Athens of ancient days, has inherited from her the privilege of being beautiful and enriched by her children. The public treasury was not always very well filled in those times any more than in the present, but wealthy citizens who had made fortunes at a distance liked to crown their commercial career by some act of liberality to the mother country. They endowed the land with superb edifices of general utility—theaters, gymnasias, temples. The modern city is likewise full of monuments which she owes to such generosity. It was easy to obtain from private individuals what the state could not give. The Olympic games had burned with so bright a luster in the past of the Greeks that they could not but have their revival at heart.—"The Olympic Games of 1896," by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, in the Century.

A Sure Sign.

"I saw Muggins on his front porch this evening smoking a cigar; it must be that his wife is away."

"What makes you think so?"

"Why, when she's at home he smokes a briar-root pipe and tries to look economical."—Buffalo Express.

Rev. John Wier, after nine years of continuous labor in Japan, is soon to return with his family to this country.

POPULARITY OF SARATOGA.

Attraction of American Watering Place

Song in London Papers.

Saratoga Springs will always be popular. You have here the best of American society, less exclusive than Newport or Lenox, less mixed than Long Branch and Manhattan Beach and vastly more representative than either, says a letter in the London Telegraph. This is mainly due, perhaps, to the enormous hotels, with their huge verandas or piazzas in front and vast garden courtyards in the rear, which is the special feature of Saratoga. These gigantic structures are among the biggest hostilities in the world. Two of the largest provide something like 2,000 beds each and their lofty and spacious halls, drawing, dining and reception rooms are all on a scale of corresponding magnitude. Here all classes meet and blend. Round the inclosed garden courts are built tiers of elegant apartments, each with its veranda, while every set of rooms on the same floor is technically a cottage. Julian Hawthorne says a walk round the circuit of these verandas takes long enough for a young man and woman to become acquainted, to get engaged and break it off again. This estimate is so definite that I hesitate almost to repeat the cruder statement that one of the courtyards measures seven acres. It is marvelous, however, how attractive the inclosures of these two great hotels are. In the hottest afternoons the branching elms and the sugar maples throw their shadows across the green sward and, in the cool, delicious evenings when the bands are playing, the fountains flowing and ladies in gauzy toilettes promenading, the scene is charming. Besides its agreeable society, let me say that Saratoga has many natural attractions. From New York you approach it as far as Albany by the Hudson—the Rhine of America. Up this river the blue tidal waters of the Atlantic flow as far as Poughkeepsie. On both sides of the stream the banks are lofty and well wooded, and all the way along are dotted with villages and country residences standing in picturesque inclosures, sloping down very often to the water's edge. On the northern side of Saratoga are Lakes George and Champlain, two of the prettiest of transatlantic inland waters. In former days also the village, like Tanglewell, owed its reputation to the springs. There are any number of them. They come bubbling up from great depths, charged with carbonic acid, sodium, potassium, lithium and calcium in varied combinations. There was a time when people came here to repair shattered constitutions by drinking at the geysers, or Washington spring, or the Saratoga Vichy of Carlisle.

A Prediction About Railways.

The following prediction, made by the Royal College of Physicians of Bavaria in 1835, is now on record in the archives of the Nuremberg and Furth Railway, in that country. When it was proposed to build this line, the physicians of the country met and formally protested against it. "Locomotion, by the aid of any kind of steam machines whatever," the Bavarian physicians declared, "should be prohibited in the interest of the public health. The rapid movements cannot fail to produce in the passengers the mental ailment called delirium furiosum. Even admitting," the protest went on, "that travelers will consent to run the risk, the state can do no less than protect the bystanders. The sight alone of a locomotive passing at full speed suffices to produce this frightful malady of the brain. It is, at any rate, indispensable that a barrier at least six feet high, should be erected on both sides of the track."

Freak of Lightning.

All the doors in John Kipp's house at Cedar Bayou, Harris County, Texas, were opened and a lid of the kitchen range was blown off by a bolt of lightning.

MISSIONS.

The annual report of the Moravian church gives 150 mission stations, 400 missionaries and 93,000 converts in heathen lands.

The native Christians in heathen lands last year gave \$559,000, more than one-ninth the amount raised in the United States.

The last of the heathen on Efate Island are being gathered into the church as the result of twenty-three years' faithful labor.

One hundred and fifty Chinese converts were baptized during the last twenty months by Rev. Hopkin Rees at Tientsin, north China.

As the American Baptist Home Mission society is heavily burdened with debt, the board of managers of that society, at a meeting held Sept. 14, decided to make no appropriations for missionaries salaries for the present for a period extending beyond Dec. 31, 1896, unless the current receipts meet time shall be very considerably increased.

The vast possibilities open to an individual society of Christian Endeavor are shown in a report that comes from Geelong, Australia. The Yarra Street Wesleyan society, which contains five divisions and 550 members, has organized a boys' club, a men's club, a birthday league for missionary purposes and a Sunday school home department. During the year it held 208 cottage prayer meetings, besides seventy-eight open air services; 4,251 visits were paid and 2,488 loaves of bread distributed. The Juniors provided an outing for one hundred slum children, distributed 150 bouquets of flowers and made more than 500 visits. The other labors of the society were on a proportionate scale.

Beauty and the Beast.

A South American puma lion, the fiercest animal of that half of the hemisphere, is the pet of little Miss Ethel Curzon, the 15-year-old daughter of Captain Henry F. Curzon, late of Her Majesty's service.

Damon is a fine, sleek and silken-haired specimen of his tribe. He was born three years ago among the pampas grass region of South America that is known locally as La Pampa. Curzon for years has been in that country as the representative of an English syndicate. He arrived in Philadelphia the other day accompanied by his daughter, and the puma came with them, making the long journey in a cage that was carried in the baggage car.

"Damon is the dearest creature—next to papa—on earth," said Miss Ethel to a reporter. "He saved my life, and the debt of gratitude I owe him can never be repaid."

"Damon is a puma," said the captain. "Here in Pennsylvania the early settlers knew his congeners under the

and she rides a horse with all the grace and fearlessness of a gaucho. Last fall we had a grand 'cerco,' or assembly of ranchmen and hunters, to hunt ostriches and other game. The sport is exciting, but far from dangerous, and Ethel was one of the party. The hunters, numbering about thirty, spread themselves round in a vast ring, and advancing toward the center, drove the animals before them.

"During the excitement of the chase which followed, while we were all engaged in preventing the ostriches, deer, etc., from doubling back and escaping, I noticed that my daughter had disappeared. Her absence did not alarm me at the time, for I thought she had become tired and gone back to the estancia. I was nearly frantic when, late at night, I reached home and found that Ethel's pony had come galloping home early in the afternoon without its rider. Dreading the worst I immediately got together a band of gauchos and we started out to search for my darling.



MISS CURZON'S TAME PUMA LION.

name of panther, 'painter,' or catamount. In California they call him the cougar, or 'mountain lion.' During the past decade and a half of years I have had an abundant opportunity to become pretty intimately acquainted with Sir Puma. The longer I know him the better I like him.

"He has been very unfortunate in his biographers. They give him, it is true, a high character for courage, but, at the same time, because of their ignorance of his true nature, they impute to him a cowardly fear of man that he is very far from possessing. He will not, as a rule, defend himself against man, and the gauchos of the pampas, understanding and appreciating the mysterious gentle instinct of this ungulate beast; call him 'amigo del cristiano.'

"Damon was full grown when we first became acquainted with him. He was never captured, and, except when we are traveling, is never restrained of his liberty. I am on my way back to my old home in England primarily to visit my aged parents and incidentally to place my daughter at school. When I return to South America I shall leave Damon behind, for it would be cruelly to both to separate him from Ethel.

"Eventually one of the gauchos found Ethel in a bunch of scrub, lying on the ground with a broken leg. Her pony, early in the hunt, had stepped into an 'oculto' hole and thrown its rider. Being unable to move because of her fractured limb, Ethel had shouted for assistance, but her voice was drowned by the yells of excited hunters and the hope of rescue vanished. She is a brave girl, and, knowing that a search would be made for her as soon as her absence was discovered, she made herself as comfortable as possible and awaited the arrival of help.

"As night approached, and no one came, she began to experience genuine alarm, and when, about an hour before dark, a puma—now her pet Damon—appeared and squatted down in the grass close beside her, she gave herself up for lost. The beast, however, did not seem to notice her, and her courage revived. She remembered that the puma rarely, if ever, molests a human being, and she began to hope that the creature would go away.

"After awhile the puma became restless, frequently going away and returning, and finally it stayed away so long that she thought it had left her for good. About midnight she heard the deep roar of a jaguar, and abandoned all hope, for the South American tiger is man's deadly foe.

"By raising herself on her elbow, she

was able to see the outline of the jaguar crouching near her, but its face was turned from her, and it appeared to be intently watching some object upon which it was about to spring. Presently it crept out of sight, and there followed a deep silence, broken suddenly by frightful yells and screams of pain, coupled with the fierce growls and snarls of the puma, and the sounds of desperate conflict.

"The puma and the jaguar are sworn enemies, and the two great beasts were having a battle to the finish. The battle lasted for some time, but near morning the puma, sorely wounded, crept through the grass and crouched down beside my daughter, purring like a cat. The creature seemed so friendly that Ethel ventured to stroke his fur with her hand, whereupon the puma began to play and roll about like a kitten. When we rode up the puma crouched over her body and began to growl. Several rifles were leveled at the head of the brute, but Ethel begged us not to shoot, and from that day to this the two have been inseparable."

A FRENCH BABY.

Legal Formalities on the Birth of a Possible Soldier.

The birth of a new citizen in France at once gives rise to countless formalities and an avalanche of legal scribbles, which would teach him, could he but understand, that his country is par excellence the home of legal ceremony and administration, says the Century. Within the first twenty-four hours notice of the birth must be sent to the mayor's office (there is such an office in every village in France), so that the official physician may call and make the necessary legal statement. I suppose he wants to convince himself that the declaration already made is correct, and that the family, when it announced the birth of a girl, was not trying to screen a future soldier from his compulsory service. Then the father, accompanied by two witnesses, goes to fill out the birth certificate and gives his child its legitimate, documented position, to which he or she will be obliged to have recourse in all the great, and frequently in the minor, circumstances of life, from one end of it to the other. Without it the child could not enter a school, nor draw lots on entering the army, nor get married, nor be buried. The least mistake of form would have most serious consequences; the baptismal names declared must always be placed in the same order on all future deeds. These are usually saints' names. I recall the amusing anger of a young American father of my acquaintance who wished to give his son born in Paris the name of the great sailor Duquesne, in remembrance of the avenue where the baby had seen the light of day, and, in addition, the family name of one of his friends, which no Frenchman could pronounce. All this seemed so shocking and incongruous to the registrar that the certificate was made out only after interminable discussion.

Patent Right Swindles.

An exchange says that a smooth patent right swindling scheme is being worked in some of the states. A man comes to a farmer with a patent wagon tongue for which great claims are made. He has only that one county left and will sell the right for two hundred and fifty dollars. A few days later, while the farmer is thinking over the matter, another man comes along, who has learned that the farmer has the right to the valuable invention, and offers him four hundred dollars for it, paying him ten dollars down. The farmer at once goes and closes the deal with the first party, giving his note or cash for the two hundred and fifty dollars. In the meantime the second man disappears and the two schemers meet and "divvy." If a note, it is discounted at the nearest bank.

His Mistake.

Mr. Foote (the shoemaker)—"Who was it invented this walking through the grass barefooted?" Mr. Block—"I believe it was a minister." "Well, he seems to have mistaken the kind of soles he should try to save."—Yonkers Statesman.

STAGE WHISPERS.

"She can do more in five seconds with her eyes than Anthony Comstock can undo in five years," says James G. Humecker of Anna Held, the latest sensation imported from Paris.

An English comedian says the only way to successfully spring a joke on British theater-goers is to first announce that a joke is about to be sprung, then to spring it, and lastly to explain that it has been sprung.

Clement Scott, the famous London critic, has a son playing in Daly's company in New York in "The Geisha." A son of William Winter and a grandson of Tom Haddaway, the famous American comedian, are also in the same organization.

It is probable that "Tom Grogan," which Augustus Thomas aided Hopkinson Smith in making into a play, may not be produced this season after all. Considerable work has to be done on it to get it into shape, as the first draught was far from satisfactory.

Boston is moving in the abolition of obstructive hats in theaters. One manager sends an usher to every offending woman, just before the rise of the curtain, to ask her to remove the nuisance, and in nearly every case she complies without ado.

Recent London papers have given much commendation to a performance by Miss Keith Wakeman, an American actress, who was formerly in Lawrence Barrett's company, and who went to England some time ago with that of E. S. Willard.