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NEMAHA, - - - - - NEBRASKA.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD BOY.

The neighborhood boy is a neighborhood joy,
With a heart that is earnest and true;
And whene'er he's away, to be absent a day,
It puts the whole block in a stew.
For without him the world in a shadow is furled
And loses its beauty and light;
But whene'er he appears, then it suddenly clears,
As he sets all our troubles aright.

Not a smile or a frown comes to our part of town,
But what he can give us the facts;
He is able to bring just the one needed thing
Which elsewhere our happiness lacks.
Folks may move in and out, yet he knows all about
All the people who dwell in our street,
And he brings us such news as we love to peruse
While he gives every item complete.

He runs errands galore to the office and store,
"Minds the baby" and favors like that,
And there's none, we agree, quite so able as he
To find a lost dog or a cat.
He's a "mother's boy," yes, and that helps him to bless
Whoever he happens to meet,
And his heart is of gold and as manly and bold
As any he hails in the street.

If there's anyone sick, he's the first one to pick
And to take them a simple bouquet,
And though rich folks or poor—doesn't matter—he's sure
To scatter kind deeds in their way.
The neighborhood boy is a neighborhood joy,
With a heart that is earnest and true;
And whene'er he's away, to be absent a day,
It puts the whole block in a stew.

—Nixon Waterman, in L. A. W. Bulletin.

A STORM ON THE COAST.

It was during one of those hot spells in the month of June, when between the mosquitoes and the heat life seemed unbearable, that Dalton suggested a hasty retreat to the pine woods and gulf breezes on the Mississippi sound.

"By all means," I said. "There is nothing doing in the way of business here; we are tied down by reason of other people's absence to our office desks, so we might just as well take up our quarters until fall by the blue waters of the gulf and run in daily to see our mail."

Then I bethought me of an elderly aunt of mine, Aunt d'Arville, whom I had not seen for quite a number of years, partly from disinclination, for I preserved a vivid recollection of her unpleasant manners, and partly because I had been absent abroad representing our house, first in Havre and then in Bremen.

"We will go to Seaview cottage," I said to Fred. "I have an elderly relative who will take us in, I have no doubt, and as we will be out of the house most of the time fishing or sailing, the old lady's moods and temper will not be intolerable."

Aunt Martha was a caution, I remembered, in those days of my youth, when we were familiarly acquainted with each other.

I suppose the poor soul's temper had been soured by her husband's failure and his too philosophical acceptance of it afterward.

His death later on did not mend matters; for like all people of her exacting temperament, and hard, determined, narrow-minded nature, she was tenacious in her affection, if wearisome in a degree in the repressed, vehement, puritanical way she had of showing it, and her grief, while sincere and respectable, was an added infliction to her surroundings.

It was a dreary atmosphere in which to bring up her only child, that pale-faced little cousin of mine, Adele.

I wondered vaguely what sort of a young woman she had grown into. She was a plain child. Her only redeeming feature I could recall was her eyes. She had inherited them from her father. They were large and brown, soft and brilliant, and were veiled with thick, dark lases, which threw a shadow on her pale little face, making her look, I thought, still more frail and melancholy.

What had induced Aunt Martha to marry our consul, Paul Beremmaux d' Arville, no one had been able to discover unless it was his brilliant wit, intense divergence from herself and handsome face.

Certainly no two people were ever more dissimilar in taste and modes of thought, and I fancy d'Arville, whom I always looked on as a most fascinating man from his fine manners, versatile conversation and general attractiveness, soon wearied of his wife's too austere, methodical temper and habits.

No doubt he failed to discover under her cold, precise manner the fine feeling and nature which lay hid and did not reveal itself. So, like many another marriage, they grew apart, and when financial troubles befell she became harsh and bitter, albeit she bore her burdens bravely, and d'Arville drifted into club habits and kept out of the house.

Seaview is a beautiful place.

A low, wide-spreading cottage, whose windows and piazzas are covered with clambering rose vines and whose green lawn is shaded by gigantic oaks, it invites to repose.

As a boy I would loll on one of the various benches under their shade, reading some novel or detective story, while the soft swish of the water on the narrow beach just beyond the garden gate played a minor key to the thrilling incidents to the story. Or I would sit on the grass and mend my lines and nets, while little pale-faced Del would sit curled up with her Newfoundland, in a subdued, silent way, by my side.

"There is splendid fishing round the islands out in the bay, a few hours' run across from Seaview," I said to Fred, as I folded and sealed my letter to Aunt Martha, telling her to expect us by the afternoon train.

"The old lady has her cranks and crotchets," I explained, as we opened the gate and walked up a garden path between trim box borders and flower beds and skirted a well-kept lawn, "but she is 'true blue' all through."

Aunt Martha greeted us with less frigidity than I had anticipated, and the frosts of years, in silvering her hair, had obviously mellowed some of her asperities of temper.

We had a dainty, well-served supper, and it was only when Fred and I sat out on the pier-head enjoying our cigars over the lapping water of the bay that I remembered the existence of my poor, fragile little cousin Adele.

"Great Scot!" I said, jumping up; "Aunt Martha will never forgive me!"

I hurried back to make inquiries and apologies, and as I was leaving the wharf which runs out over 100 feet in the shallow water of the bay, reaching nearly to the channel, I saw a fairy vision approaching.

A young woman came toward me, walking with slow, tranquil grace, while holding her soft, pale blue gown aloof from the dust of the shell road.

She was bareheaded, and the waning afternoon light seemed to pause, all entangled in the ripples of her golden brown hair. Never had I seen anything quite so lovely as this maiden, whose brown eyes shone with a subdued mirth, while her smile of recognition and welcome was beyond all description.

"Why, Cousin Allen, you don't seem to recognize your poor little playmate of years ago. Del is very glad to see you again, nevertheless."

In common parlance, you could have knocked me down with a feather, as I instantly told Del, while insisting that a long lost cousin was entitled to something more demonstrative than a handshake.

But Del laughingly objected until a renewed acquaintance, she said, would verify the existence of the "rough, good-natured fellow she liked so much."

We strolled out on the narrow planking of the wharf, side by side, to where Fred still sat, enjoying the cool breezes of the gulf, his cigar, the broad view of paling waters and sky tints, and the faint song of some fisher folks wafted to us by the light evening winds as a coasting lugger beat her way slowly down the channel.

Fred's back was toward us, and he only turned, aware of our presence, when I called to him to present him to my refound cousin, Miss Del.

That was my great mistake.

No one knew better than I did that Dalton is a particularly pleasing fellow. Everybody likes him.

He is clearly one of nature's favorites, for besides an uncommonly bright mind, much practical sense, as evidenced by his success in life, Fred has a gracious and a bright, unaffected wit which makes him a much sought after man by all, and everywhere, at all times and all places.

So it was to be expected that a child like Del, brought up austerely, aloof from the world, mostly in the grand solitudes of Aunt Martha's seashore retreat, would be quickly charmed by so pleasant a fellow.

June merged into July, which in turn slipped by with swift, unconscious flight, the pleasant days following each other all too quickly, as we would run into town each morning, look at our mail, step in at the club, then catch the nine o'clock train and speed back to Seaview to lounge through the cool, sweet evenings and nights.

August came and went all to swiftly, each day adding to the long account of hopes, fears, desires, anticipations, determined resolves and possible bitter antagonisms which we would hourly balance, Fred and I, when the fall would come and the summer cease.

From a close friendship and intimacy, built on long years of liking, esteem and daily intercourse, Fred and I fell into a polite frigidity and an aloofness from each other, which was galling to each of us, but which neither could break through or overcome.

Between us stood Del's sweet witcheries, rippling laughter, bright words and wondrous graces, piled mountain high in an impenetrable barrier, which cut in two the ties of boyish years and the friendships of manhood, leaving us a stern antagonism and an implacable determination to each seek without stay or stinct what the other most coveted on this green, smiling earth.

Aunt Martha led her busy life with calm regularity, and Del each day gave us a joyous greeting from her pony carriage when we alighted from the train; chatted with Fred and coaxed me to a better humor, or sat with me on the moonlit porch and sang some sweet ditty, then chatted in French with Fred, adding each day to the list of our long reckoning, which in the after years would make or mar two lives.

"You both leave to-morrow for good and all!" said Del that last evening, clasping her little hands in mock despair. "Whatever will I do without you! How dull Seaview will be when you are gone! Poor me! No more sailing! No more fishing! No more moody, silent, irrational, cross companions to make time pass pleasantly, and to break the deathly monotony of these great oppressive woods!"

Fred looked at me and I at him.

We were grouped under a spreading oak, down by the water's edge, where a small table and chairs had been placed, for Del delighted to serve us tea when twilight set in, close to the murmuring tide, as the wavelets broke gently on the white sands of the beach.

Fred and I understood each other.

Slowly he rose, lit a cigar with a slightly unsteady hand and strolled off down the straight shell road.

Del's eyes followed his tall figure as it stood out distinct in the paling light, and unconscious of my steady gaze, her great brown eyes took on a tender, wistful look, which pierced my heat like a poisoned dagger.

"Will the solitude seem dull when we are gone, Del?" I asked.

"Deathly dull!" said Del, with a slight quiver of her tender mouth.

"Aunt Martha shall bring you to town, you poor little caged bird!" I said, taking her hand in mine.

"Mamma will never leave Seaview, nor let me go away even for a day without her," said Del, moving up closer to me, as if for protection against those long, solitary days of approaching winter.

"Then we must take you away by force, little one," I said, with decision, putting my arm protectingly around her shoulder. Del leaned her head, crowned with its rippling burnished gold, on my shoulder, not knowing of the throbbing heartbeats so close to hers, or of the rising storm of emotions she was creating.

"Oh, Cousin Allen, if you could only get mamma to leave this dreary, dreary place," she said, pleadingly—"get her to consent to my living like other girls, I would love you, oh, so dearly, all my life!"

"Do you promise that, Del? Is it a bargain?" I asked, while a dull pain seized hold of my heartstrings. "Do you truly love your elderly cousin?"

"Of course I do," answered Del, nestling close to my side, while the soft evening breezes wafted me the scent of her perfumer hair.

"I love you dearly," she added.

But her frank, unembarrassed words only added to the growing pain in my heart, to the tumultuous emotions which were invading me.

"And Fred?" I asked, softly, holding her gently to my side.

"Cousin Allen!" she murmured in an imploring tone, turning to hide on my shoulder her lovely face, over which had swept a wave of color.

"All right, little one," I whispered, reassuringly, while the tempest of baffled hopes, ruined anticipations and murdered joys swept in a burst of fury over my soul and senses, overwhelming me with their bitter waters.

"All right, Del, little cousin mine! You shall not spend the glorious years of your youth in these sad solitudes. Your happiness is dearer to me than life itself, and I know one who lives only in the hope of having soon the right to order your sweet young life on lines of light and happiness. I will see Aunt Martha," I added, rising slowly, "and I will send Fred to you."

"Cousin Allen!" she again said, clinging breathlessly to me.

"Let me go, dearie," I said, lightly, while the fury of a bitter regret and a hurricane of wild emotion shook my soul and senses and threatened to submerge my loyal determination to let Fred gain the sunshine of life, henceforth lost forever to me.

"Look here," I added, jestingly, "I must call Fred back before the storm bursts—before a furious tornado comes along to interfere with our bright plans for the future!"

"Why, Cousin Allen!" said Del, lifting her head in astonishment from its confiding rest on my breast, and lifting to mine in wide-eyed wonder her beautiful soft eyes. "What in the world are you taking about? There's no storm brewing! Why, the night is calm and beautiful! Just look how quiet the water is; how serenely the stars shine out!"

But I laughed aloud, knowing the tempest which was raging in my heart, the wrecked blossoms of hope and joy which lay bruised and scattered over the advancing years, and I called to Fred, who was slowly approaching:

"Here, Dalton," I said, cheerily. "This little cousin of mine, over whom I have assumed a father's authority, fears the dull winter months. She would like, the silly little bird that she is, to flee from the sweet protecting solitudes of her old cottage home. I told her you could suggest a satisfactory arrangement for her. I am going to discuss the matter with Aunt Martha."

Fred stood up and wrung my hand with silent and deep emotion.

It was late when our evening, filled with so much joy to two of us, came to an end.

"Cousin Allen," whispered Del, holding fast my hands, as we said good night. "How could you fear a storm? Was there ever a night so blissfully calm and beautiful? This is the kind of weather that reigns in Paradise."

"Sans doute, little fiancee," I answered back laughingly; "nevertheless, a great storm has raged on the gulf coast this evening, and the ruin and wreckage it has left behind it will never be repaired."—N. O. Times-Democrat.

THE USE OF BURRS.

They Carry the Seeds of Plants Away from the Parent Stem.

After a stroll afield, in the fall, one is apt to wonder, as he works away at the burrs that cover his clothes, what use they can possibly be. Burrs are a great nuisance to men and animals; but the plants they grow on find them very serviceable, for they are simply fruits covered with spines or prickles; and this is only another way plants have to distribute their seeds. That it is a scheme that works well anyone can see who has a hunting-dog, and keeps it in his yard. In the spring fine crops of Spanish needles and clot-burrs come up as if by magic, where there were none before. They have grown from the burrs the dog brought home in his coat the autumn before. Around woolen mills in New England plants from the west spring up in a mysterious way, and nearly always these have burr fruits. They have grown from the burrs taken from the fleece of sheep, in cleaning, and thrown out as waste. Some troublesome weeds have been introduced in this manner. On the prairies there are many plants with this kind of fruit. In former days, when great herds of buffaloes roamed the plains, their hair caught up these burrs, which thus stole long rides, like the tramps they are. Even now, in old buffalo-wallow plants are found that do not grow elsewhere in the country round.

Some burrs, like Spanish needles, have only three or four slender spines, or awns, as they are called, at the summit of the fruit. If we look at them through a magnifying-glass, we find them bearing sharp, downward-pointing barbs, like that of a fish-hook. The sand-spur, an ill weed that grows on sea beaches and sandy river banks, has burrs covered with such spines. The boy who has stepped on sand-spurs with his bare feet knows this to his sorrow. The tiny barbs go in easily, but every attempt to draw them out makes them tear into the flesh.

Often the spines or bristles are hooked instead of being barbed. The clot-burr, or cockle-burr, that grows abundantly in waste ground, and the agrimony of our woods, are examples. Burdock has such hooked prickles on its fruits, and they stick so fast together, that children make of them neat little baskets, handles and all. The tick-trefoil has jointed pods, covered thickly with small hooked hairs that can hardly be seen without a magnifying glass. These are the small, flat, brown burrs that cover the clothing after a walk through the woods in September. They are most annoying burrs, worse than clot-burrs, they are so small and stick so fast.—Thomas H. Kearney, Jr., in St. Nicholas.

Carlyle Reproved.

An amusing and characteristic anecdote of Thomas Carlyle is given in Mrs. Ross' "Early Days Recalled." Mrs. Ross, the daughter of Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon, enjoyed from her earliest years the privilege of meeting many distinguished persons under delightful conditions. Her mother's beauty and wit, as well as her father's social and official rank, attracted men and women eminent in art, letters and politics to their home. The only visitor whom little Janet cordially disliked was Mr. Thomas Carlyle. She says: "One afternoon my mother had a discussion with him on German literature; her extraordinary eloquence and fire prevailing, Carlyle lost his temper, and burst forth in his Scotch tongue: 'You're just a windbag, Lucie, you're just a windbag!' I had been listening with all my ears, and conceiving him to be very rude, interrupted him by saying: 'My papa always says that men should be civil to women;' for which pert remark I got a scolding from my mother; but Mr. Carlyle was not offended, and turning to her observed: 'Lucie, that child of yours has an eye for an inference.'"—Youth's Companion.

A Thoughtful Girl.

"No wonder the pleasures of courting have declined," said the stout youth. "Just look at the flimsiness of these modern chairs."

And he pointed to a slender affair of white bamboo, touched with gilt.

"You mustn't judge by appearances," said the stout girl, softly. "I've had that chair thoroughly braced with the very best of steel rods, and it is now guaranteed to stand a pressure of 60 pounds to the square inch."

Then they both sat down in it as a final test.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

He Knew Him.

"That's a very stupid brute of yours, John," said a Scotch minister to one of his parishioners, a peat dealer, who drove his merchandise from door to door in a small cart drawn by a donkey. "I never see you but the creature is braying."

"Eh, sir," said the peat dealer, "ye ken the heart's warm when friends meet."—Spare Moments.

NISHAPUR TURQUOISE MINES.

Lazy Methods by Which the Stones Are Gotten Out—Jewels That Fade.

The famous turquoise mines of Nishapur, in northern Persia, are believed to be the only turquoise mines in the world which have been worked extensively or which have produced the turquoise of perfect shape and color. On approaching the mines from Nishapur, after entering the low hills and gradually ascending, one arrives first at the villages inhabited by the miners, which are on undulating ground about 5,000 feet above sea level. After another gradual ascent for about a mile by a very good road the foot of a hill about 1,000 feet in height is reached. All the mines are on the south face of this hill, and from the first to the last the distance as the crow flies is not more than half a mile. The Reish mine, which is the only one worked on a large scale or with vigor, produces the greater part of the turquoises at present sent to market. It is near the top of one of the highest ridges, at an altitude of about 6,000 feet above sea level. The entrance is a hollowed-out cave, about 12 yards across, with a vertical shaft some five yards in diameter. Two men were reclining at the mouth of this shaft with their backs against the wall of the cave, and turning with their bare feet a rickety wooden wheel, which brought up the debris from below in a small sheepskin bag holding no more than a peck, perhaps. This was received by a third man, who unhooked, emptied and reattached it. The other two men removed their feet, and the bag went down with a run some 40 feet, where three other men were similarly engaged on a ledge in the shaft. The mine itself is 80 or 90 feet from the surface. The miners first descend by means of a narrow diagonal tunnel, and then scramble down the rough sides of the shaft.

At the mouth of the cave, which is on the precipitous hillside, half a dozen men were seated close together on a ledge, breaking with small hammers the fragments of rock as they were brought up from below. When a turquoise was discovered it was placed on one side in its rough state, encased in rock, and sent to Meshed. Unfortunately, though the mine is very productive, and the turquoises of good shape, their color soon goes. Since the Abdur Rezai mine fell in it may be said that the stones of perfect shape and color are very rarely found. But, though really good turquoises are rare, there is abundance of imperfect and bad stones, which are eagerly bought, for all orientals prize them, and the very poorest like to possess even a green and spotted one set in a tin ring. It is more than likely, however, that the hill contains an abundance of good stones. Some of these now found look excellent at first, but the color in most cases soon fades, or a green tinge is developed, or spots appear on them. Some of these white spots can only be detected at first with a glass, and then as a mere speck, but in time they may expand and spread right across the stone. The color of most faded turquoises can be temporarily revived by dampness. In Meshed no one would dream of buying a turquoise of good color without possessing it first for some days, for it is the most treacherous of all precious stones. The turquoises, as soon as they are cut in Meshed, are nearly all sold at once for export, and their price in the town rises at least 1,000 per cent. Some years ago one could obtain in Meshed good turquoises of perfect shape, fine color, fair size, and without a flaw for a few shillings each. Turquoises are at present far cheaper at Tiflis and Constantinople than at Meshed, and at those towns one might perhaps find some of good color which have been in stock for years.—London Times.

The Tumbleweed.

Tumbleweeds spread themselves in a wholesale fashion. Instead of sending the separate seeds out into the world with the wings or hairs to carry them, the whole plant breaks off near the root, when these are ripe, and goes rolling along the ground before the wind. The bare sun-scorched deserts of the great west produce tumbleweeds, and there are some in the prairie region. It is natural that they should be most abundant where there are no hills nor trees to stop them in their course. But we have one tumbleweed in the east—the old witch grass, so-called, maybe, because it rides the wind like an old beldame. In September this grass spreads its head, or panicle, with hair-like, purple branches, in every sandy field. When the seeds are ripe the plants are blown across the field, often piling up in masses along the fences and hedgerows. As might be expected, the hair grass, which has so effective a way of spreading itself, is found throughout the United States, from ocean to ocean.—Thomas H. Kearney, Jr., in St. Nicholas.

Bright Boy.

A newsboy saw a dime lying on the ground in the City Hall park. A tramp sitting on a bench near by saw the boy pick up the piece and claimed it at once as his own.

"Your dime did not have a hole in it, did it?" asked the boy.

"Yes, it did," said the tramp; "give it up!"

"Well, this one has not got any hole in it, so I guess I'll keep it."—Harper's Young People.