

WHEN MOTHER SITS DOWN BY THE FIRE.

Oh, the 5 o'clock chime brings the coziest time
That is found in the whole of the day,
When Larry and Gus, and the others of us,
Come in from our study and play;
When we push the big chair to the hearth over there,
And pile the wood higher and higher,
And we make her a space in the very best place—
And mother sits down by the fire.

There's a great deal to say at the close of the day,
And so much to talk over with mother;
There's a comical sight of a horrible plight,
Or a ball game, or something or other,
And she'll laugh with Larry and sigh with Harry,
And smile to our heart's desire
At a triumph won or a task well done—
When sitting down there by the fire.

Then little she'll care for the clothes that we tear,
Or the havoc we make on her larder;
For the toll and strife of our every day life
She will love us a little bit harder.
Then our lady is she, and her knights we would be,
And her trust-doughty deeds will inspire;
For we long then anew to be generous and true—
When mother sits down by the fire.

THE FALLING MANTLE

TERESA TIROWEN, whose Irish grandmother was also our own, descended upon us, some weeks ago, for her annual visit. Jim says she is more like a real friend than a relation, and although, contrary to her usual custom, she had notified us in this instance of her coming, he assured her that she was none the less welcome for being expected.

"You do talk such nonsense, Jim!" bubbled Teresa, happily as we escorted her into the sitting room. "Oh, how glad I am to be here! How darling the old place looks! How cozy and shabby!"

"Be more tactful," Ted said, severely. And in the midst of her laughing, Teresa sent him a little nervous glance of compunction. Poverty is full for her of vague and pitiful terrors.

"I don't care. I love this room," she protested. "And you all look just the same, only nicer. Ted, you are terribly handsome in glasses. And, Julie, you little rose, how is Paul? When is he coming? And here's my chair! Now—tell me—tell me—tell me all the news!"

And, flinging off a coat that caused me a painful wrestle with the last commandment, and tossing aside a hat that Ju, with a sharp sigh, carried away, she took her old chair, held her shining boots to the fire, and gave a long sigh of content.

"No—no—I'm not tired," she protested, in answer to Ju's hospitable suggestions. "Truly, I'm not—nor hungry, either. That's it," as we pulled our chairs into a ring, "let's talk. How are the Winchesters? And do you see the Burreighs any more? And has Jim really got the O'Connor case?"

some reason coherence deserted her. "He—he—his plans are all—" she began, uncertainly. Then, abruptly: "Tell me about the Burreigh's party? Am I asked? Are we all going?"

"Teresa, are you dissembling?" said Ted, dramatically; "can you not be frank with me—mer child?"

"I wish you wouldn't be such an idiot," said Teresa. Her face was very rosy. And after an astonished moment Jim changed the subject again. "Didn't you say Paul was coming, Ju? Go to the telephone and hail the bird in Spanish speech."

"Here he is now," said Julie, with relief, as he came in. And in the general greeting and stir, the awkward moment passed. When the widened circle formed around the fire again, Teresa was quite herself. She clasped her silk-clad arms lazily behind her head, she crossed her silk-clad ankles in a froth of lacy petticoats, and she sent languid glances of absolute content from one face to another. The spoiled daughter of many millions, she loves to affiliate herself with our petty financial cares. She bends an intent and uncomprehending brow to the awful subject of rent. She frowns anxiously when we do—she breaks into relieved laughter when situations grow too desperate for anything but laughter.

I laughed quietly that night, when she followed her soft knock, and came



"WHO WAS AUNT SARA, JIM?"

into my room, to find me busy with my brushes.

"I don't care," said Teresa, laughing, too, and alternately kissing me violently, and holding me at arms length for radiant inspection, "this is the time I want to talk, and Jim or no Jim, I have come to tell you things."

"Things," I assented, expectantly.

Whereupon Teresa, beginning on a long braid, proceeded to a rambling account of the past months, involving every subject but one. With relative and incidental contributions from me, this lasted until we had no further excuse for remaining up and awake, and not needing one, sat on and on, wrapped in my Indian blankets, hot as to cheeks and cold as to finger tips.

"Tess," said I, finally, when the cuckoo clock on the landing had chirped unnoticed the shortest hour, and was, undiscouraged, going on to the next in length: "What did you mean by your letter?"

"Ah—oh—letter? Oh, yes, my letter! Were you surprised?" asked Teresa, unceasingly, coaxingly, innocently.

"Surprised!" echoed I, reproachfully. And I pulled a pillow between my shoulder and the uncompromising mahogany of the bed-post, preparatory to a fresh session.

"Oh, yes," said Teresa, a little confused. "Well, you see, dearest, I wrote you—I wrote you that our engage-

ment was broken, didn't I? Well, now, it isn't! Do you see?"

"I don't—in the least," said I. "You wrote that you and George had broken it off forever, and that you couldn't face all the newspaper notoriety—"

"And so I couldn't, Mary Jane."

"And you begged to come here, to try to live down the first hard months—"

"Oh—well—yes—Mary Jane," assented Teresa, in a little rush. "And I meant it. And cry—why, I simply howled one whole night. And the next day I wrote you—and that very afternoon George came. And—and—George came, you know—"

"Saw," I supplemented, "and conquered?"

"No, I conquered," said Teresa. A tiny thread of self-defense crept into her voice. "I was in the right. But it took George two weeks to see it."

"Stubborn George," said I.

"Just what I told him, the darling," said Teresa, joyfully. "Wait until I tell you about it. You know George is a civil engineer. Well, and he's been getting only a hundred and twenty-five—a month—mind you, Mary Jane."

"Not dally, then?" I wondered.

"No!—oh, you're laughing at me, pig. No. And so, of course, I couldn't marry on that, could I?"

"No, I daresay you couldn't. No, of course not!"

"Well," proceeded Teresa, who was enjoying herself. "Dad, of course, wanted to do—well, to do everything for us. But George wouldn't hear of it. He wouldn't consent to dad's giving me one cent more than he does now, not including all the things I charge everywhere. Fancy us with one servant, Mary Jane! So last month I had a little talk with dad. I cried a little, too. And what do you think the darling did. He offered George the position of manager of the factories at a thousand dollars a month."

"Manager, Tess? But does George know anything about paint, oil and varnish?" said I.

"He can learn," said Teresa, sharply. "I saw that she had used that argument before."

"But—manager?" I repeated, doubtfully.

"Assistant manager," corrected Teresa, flushing. "Bacon is manager. George will help him."

"Mr. Bacon must be getting an enormous salary," I observed.

"But why?" said Teresa, crossly. "What has that to do with it?" Then suddenly: "Bacon gets six hundred, I believe. A stupid old poke. George will soon be worth more."

"George will," I echoed. "Then George accepted?"

"Well, there was the trouble. At first he wouldn't listen. The more so," said Teresa, carelessly, "as some old creatures near Costa Rica had just written to offer him a fine position down there—four hundred to commence with, I believe. Isn't he smart? There's quite an English colony there, and a very good house, he said—and, of course he was wild to go. He came racing to me with the letter—I never saw George so excited."

Teresa's jaw squared, even as does Uncle John's at times.

"Well, then, of course, we quarreled. Does he suppose I'm going to an awful place like that, where I don't know a soul—black servants, probably—no electricity—no theaters—no shops. Never! So we broke our engagement, and then I wrote you. And then George came—at last. And he's going to cable them 'no' on the first of the month."

"He really consented, did he?"

"Well," said Teresa, with a little frown, "I shan't feel sure of him until the cable has gone. But it goes next week."

And she gave me another violent hug.

I never have scolded her—I never think of it. But I could not sleep in the few hours before daylight, for wondering if my cousin dreamed how high a price one man was paying for her favor.

"Hello," said Julie, at the telephone, "is this Main 2020? ... Is Mrs. Burreigh—oh, how do you do, Mrs. Burreigh? This is Julia Hancock.... No, Julie.... Yes.... Oh, yes.... We got them.... It was about that that I wanted to speak to—.... Oh, yes, indeed, we're coming.... every one of us.... We're having a dreadful time thinking up costumes.... Oh, no, it's fine!.... Yes.... Oh, we're sure to.... We always do have a good time at your house.... And, oh, Mrs. Burreigh, I wanted to ask you if I might bring my cousin, Miss Tirowen, you know?.... Yes, that's the one!.... Oh, truly now, won't it?... Mary Jane thinks it's very cool in me to—.... Oh, you're very sweet to say that. That's the way we always do feel, I'm sure.... Thank you.... Then don't let me keep you. Yes, I can imagine you are. Good-by, Mrs. Burreigh."

"There," said our youngest, turning from the telephone. "That's settled. The old angel is delighted to have you, Tess."

"But what about a costume," said Teresa in a panic.

"You told me on Sunday that you thought of one during the sermon,"

said Jim. "Can't you remember it, Mary Jane?"

"Oh—now—what was it?" said I, distractedly.

"Something with a story, you know," Ju reminded me, "which the wearer must be prepared to tell."

"Oh, yes—oh, yes," said I. "Tess can wear the famous Casillon opera-coat. I came across it in a trunk the other day. It's the very thing."

"That will be good," said Ju, with brightening eyes.

"But has it a history?" objected Tess.

"History!" echoed Jim. "Had Napoleon? Why, it belonged to mother's Aunt Sara. Go get it, infant. I don't know how to find things in trunks."

Julie ran off, and Teresa began to be interested.

"Who was Aunt Sara, Jim?" said she.

"Hear her," said Ted, from the piano bench, "as if she didn't know."

"Well, but I don't," said Teresa.

"Here it is— isn't it dear," said Ju, coming in breathlessly, with the old cloak over her arm. She made a sweeping display of it in the firelight. "Look at the old wadding, Teresa! And feel the silk—how thick! And look, pockets you could put a dress into! Here, stand up, Tess."

She slipped it over Teresa's slender shoulders. The effect was wonderfully quaint and pretty.

"But who was Aunt Sara?" persisted Tess, "and why have I never heard of her?"

"She's in all the histories of early days," Ted said. "Tell about her, James."

"Know, then, ignorance, that she was one of the women who crossed the plains in forty-eight," said Jim, as Teresa settled back in her chair, still wrapped in the coat. "She was a beauty, and had been a rich girl—a Tremayne, of Baltimore. However, the poor little thing married against every one's wishes—married this Dick Casillon, you know—a dandy fellow, but without a penny. And, in the course of a year or two, they started for the land o' gold. Her baby was three months old. Well, just about everything that could happen happened to the 'Bonney' party. They got separated—their oxen died—Indians robbed them—they lost their way! Finally, when their half of the party consisted of five men, three women, and the baby, the Indians attacked, and one of the men, an old one, was horribly hurt. Water had given out—or nearly. It seems that Aunt Sara was the heart of the whole party—always hopeful, always brave—singing when she hadn't the courage to talk—and so on. Would you believe that she persuaded them, in this crisis, to leave her to take care of the old man while they pushed on for water?"

"Well, but they didn't!" whispered Teresa.

"Oh, but they did. And there she was, two nights and a day, with a baby and a sick old man, in the desert. Uncle Dan had to go—they were so short-handed—but they say he hardly spoke until they got back to her."

"And she was dead," said Teresa, with calm certainty.

"Oh, heavens, no," said Ju, cheerfully. "She lived through worse than that. She was quite calm when they came back. The old man was asleep. She didn't stir until Uncle Dan was close to her, and then she said: 'Don't wake them unless you have water,' and the next instant Uncle Dan, who was crying like a baby, put the canteen against her lips. She used to say that to the end of her life she dreamed of that drink."

Teresa had risen. She stood staring into the fire with unseeing eyes.

"It—it makes one rather ashamed, doesn't it?" she said, half aloud. "It makes me ashamed! What a selfish—what a selfish cat you must think I am."

"I don't understand," said I, at a loss.

Teresa laughed, but not very gayly. "I was only thinking," she said, "that Aunt Sara wouldn't be very proud to have me wear her coat. Why—why—I'm too big a coward to even go to Costa Rica with George."

She fought tears for a moment, while we others, uncomfortable and puzzled, stared at her. Then she was suddenly on her knees, with her wet face buried in my lap.

"Oh, Mary Jane, I know I ought to give him his chance!" she sobbed. "I knew I would be sorry if I didn't. I'm so ashamed of myself. I've been so miserable about it. Poor old George. I don't see how he can care for me at all! Oh, won't you boys stop staring—and go wire him to come and take me home! And that I'll marry him next week if he wants me to—and g-g-go with him t-t-to to the D-desert of S-s-sahara!"—San Francisco Argonaut.

RAILROAD BUILT TO MUSIC.

It Goes to Abomey, in Dahomey, Once the Scene of Human Sacrifices.

Abomey, the town in which Behanzin, King of Dahomey, lived, was infamous sixteen years ago for the slaughter of human beings that took place there annually. Some thousands of men and women were killed every year to win the favor of the gods or to be companions of deceased persons in the other world. All prisoners of war were thus sacrificed, and many slaves were purchased from neighboring countries for this purpose.

Then the French overthrew the monster Behanzin and brought peace of mind to the million people whom he ruled with a rod of iron. Five years ago they began to build a railroad, which has now reached Abomey, the scene of their human sacrifices.

The completed part of the railroad is seventy-five miles long, and many hundreds of the natives are now grading the roadbed for its extension to the Niger River. The French have had some funny experiences in building this road.

It starts from the port of Cotonou, and the French had no difficulty in getting the coast natives to work on the road, because they had been trained to work for nearly ten years, had become used to labor, and liked its substantial results. There was trouble, however, when the roadbed approached the large native town of Walda, which is filled with delights that are dear to the natives.

Few Dahomeyans when they go near this town can resist the temptation to make a holiday there. When the railroad came within sight of Walda the workmen had just received their wages. They deserted to a man, and it was certain that they would do no more work till they had spent all their money.

No effort was made to get the men back, but messengers were sent through the country to ring bells in every settlement and proclaim that the French would pay good wages to women and girls to work on the railroad. Within a day many hundreds of women and girls were carrying baskets of sand on their heads to dump into a marsh across which the track was to be laid.

The roadbed for the rails was thus built across the marsh, and the women were retained in the service until Walda was reached, when the faithless men suddenly came clamorous for re-employment.

While the coast section was being built the inland part of the line was also started, but under different labor conditions. In the interior the natives had not learned to work for the white man, and they would not enter his service until their chiefs brought pressure to bear upon them.

A goodly sum was promised to each chief if he could guarantee to supply a certain number of men. In this way sufficient labor was procured. The chiefs were held responsible for the faithfulness of their men. The laborers were well paid.

But it took some time to train the men for this hard work. Their native music seemed to provide the stimulus they needed, and so scores of musicians with tam-tams, or drums, horns, and other squeaky instruments were employed.

They distributed music all along the line. The blacks seemed to forget their fatigue when the music struck up, and so the tam-tams and horns helped railroad extension all the way to Abomey.

Reliability Is Wanted.

The great prizes of life do not fall to the most brilliant, to the cleverest, to the shrewdest, to the most long-headed, or to the best educated, but to the most level-headed men, to the men of soundest judgment. When a man is wanted for a responsible position, his shrewdness is not considered so important as his sound judgment. Reliability is what is wanted. Can a man stand without being tripped; and, if he is thrown, can he land upon his feet? Can he be depended upon, relied upon under all circumstances to do the right thing, the sensible thing? Has the man a level head? Has he good horse sense? Is he liable to fly off on a tangent or to "go off half-cooked"? Is he "faddy"? Has he "wheels in his head"? Does he lose his temper easily, or can he control himself? If he can keep a level head under all circumstances, if he cannot be thrown off his balance, and is honest, he is the man wanted.—O. S. Marden in "Success Magazine."

Sure of Himself.

"I'll give you a position as clerk to start with," said the merchant, "and pay you what you are worth. Is that satisfactory?"

"Oh, perfectly," replied the college graduate, "but—er—do you think the firm can afford it?"

Not a Good Chauffeur.

She (petulantly)—What made you so late?

He (plaintively)—I came up in my motor car and passed here three times before I could manage to stop.—Ally Sloper.

More than One Dollar Left.

Burrighs—Sal, old man, there was a time when you promised to share your last dollar with me.

Riebigy—That's all right; I haven't got down to it yet.—Catholic Standard

No one ever ate as much mince pie as it weighs afterward.