

A SECRET SONG.

O snowbird! snowbird! Welcome thy note when maple boughs are bare; Thy merry twitter, thy emphatic call, Like silver trumpets pierces the freezing air, When time the radiant flakes begin to fall. We know thy secret. When the day grows dim, Far from the homes that thou hast cheered so long. Thy chirping changes to a twilit hymn! O snowbird, snowbird, wherefore hide thy song? O snowbird! snowbird! Is it a song of sorrow none may know, An aching memory? Nay, too glad the note! Untouched by knowledge of our human woes, Clearly the crystal flutings fall and float. We hear thy tender ecstasy, and cry: "Lend us thy gladness that can brave the chill!" Under the splendors of the winter sky, O snowbird, snowbird, carol to us still. —Elizabeth Costway Roberts in "The Century."

MISS MARTHA.

Miss Martha Bailey—known throughout Roseville simply as "Miss Martha"—sat by one of the windows of her cozy sitting room, putting the last stitches into a flannel skirt for old Mrs. Bodley, who suffered terribly with the rheumatism, which was not improved by the weekly scrubbing she gave the offices in the brick block on Main street.

Miss Martha had just sewed a stout horn button on the waist belt, and was about to fold the skirt up, smiling at the thought of the old woman's delight when she should receive the gift, when the hall door opened without the ceremony of a preceding knock, and a neighbor, Mrs. Marsh, came in.

"You ought not to sew by twilight, Miss Martha," she said, as she entered the room, "you'll ruin your eyes. But that's not what I came here to say; Mrs. Norcross died an hour ago."

The smile faded from Miss Martha's face, and her eyes grew humid. "Poor woman," she said, in her low, sweet voice. "So she has gone at last. She suffered a great deal."

"Yes, and she was glad to go. But she had every attention, in spite of being a stranger here. Dr. Edgecourt visited her every day, and never charged her a cent, I know; and all the neighbors sent things to eat. Cancers are terrible things. She was a mighty good woman. Poor soul! But 'Dow,' with a sudden change of tone, 'what's to be done with Eva?'"

"Has she no relative at all?" "No one. She is too refined and pretty to do housework, even if she was strong enough, which she isn't. She can't go to the poorhouse, of course, and she hasn't a dollar—there's to be a subscription to pay the burial expenses."

Miss Martha smoothed the flannel skirt with her white, thin hands, her face wearing an expression of deep thought mingled with anxiety. Once she opened her lips as if to speak, then hesitated and closed them again. Ought she to make this sacrifice which seemed urged upon her? It would be selfish not to do so. She raised her head and said, in a firm, sweet voice:

"The girl must come to me, since there is no one else to take her. I have plenty for one—I can make it enough for two by exercising economy."

"That's just like you, Miss Martha! I knew you'd make the offer. The girl has got a first rate education, and she can study up enough to take a school by next fall. Of course you won't want her around after you are married."

A deep flush came into Miss Martha's naturally pale face; she dropped her eyes, and turned away from Mrs. Marsh, with some murmured excuse about making the flannel skirt she held into a bundle to be sent away.

The neighbors agreed that Eva Norcross could not have found a better home than she had at Miss Martha's. The little cottage stood in a large garden, well filled with fruit trees and shrubs. In the summer it was gay with flowers of very many varieties, and sweet smelling honeysuckle wandered over and nearly concealed the fence and front piazza. Miss Martha had lived in the cottage with old Hannah for twelve years. The three of them had been engaged to Dr. Tom Edgecourt, whose practice was yet too small to enable him to marry. He was a year younger than Miss Martha, and this fact often stung her very keenly. She sometimes stood before her looking glass and attentively studied her face, wishing she was 20 instead of 30, and had the bloom of ten years before her hair was still glossy and abundant, her eyes still bright; but the plumpness and bloom of her early girlhood had fled forever.

Occasionally she wondered if Tom would always love her, and tortured herself with imagining it a sacrifice for him to marry her. Would not a young girl suit him better? She started like a guilty thing when Hannah's tap at the door or cill from the hall below interrupted these meditations. She was ashamed of herself that she thought so much of her departed prettiness and the difference between her age and Tom's. Yet she could not drive away her harassing doubts, nor would she try to set them at rest by speaking of them to Tom. She was shy and sensitive, and so was he, and they were both very proud.

Eva Norcross found her new home a very quiet but not an unhappy one. She was gentle and timid, and did not care for the society of girls of her own age. She liked nothing better than to lie in an easy chair all day with a book or some embroidery in her white, pretty hands, which Miss Martha was never weary of admiring. The dead mother had indulged her one child, and never taught her to make herself useful. There was no need for her to be active in the cottage. At the outset Miss Martha had told her that she would be required to do nothing but study, Hannah being fully competent to do the entire work of the small establishment.

"You must educate yourself to teach," Mrs. Marsh said, one morning, as she entered the cottage in her abrupt way and found Eva embroidering a cushion. "You can't live on Miss Martha all your life. Next fall we will try to get you the district school at Dodd's Corner."

Eva shuddered and grew a little pale, while the work fell from her hand. "I have heard that the children at Dodd's Corner were very rough with the last master," she said, in her soft, low voice.

for a moment, on his way to make a professional visit, and Miss Martha told him what Mrs. Marsh had said.

The young man sat down by Eva and took her hand in his. Miss Martha watched him closely, wondering if he noticed how round and white was the wrist on which he pressed his finger.

"She is not sick," he said; "all she needs is fresh air and exercise;" and then he proposed that she should wrap up and get into his sleigh at the door and drive with him to the house of his patient, two miles away.

"Can't you go, too, Martha, he asked. "We will crowd you in somewhere." "I do not care to go," she said, and Tom thought her manner rather cold and depressing. He did not urge the matter, for he was easily wounded, and never asked her a second time to grant him a favor. He was not a demonstrative lover, perhaps because Miss Martha never encouraged caresses. She did not think it modest or womanly to do so, yet she often caught herself wishing that Tom would be more affectionate. They had been engaged for three years, but had seen comparatively little of each other, owing to Tom's studies and poor patients—of which there were many—and they had never grown familiar, as is the case with most lovers.

Miss Martha watched the couple drive away. Tom bent to arrange the buffalo robe more closely about his companion, and said something which made them both laugh, and Miss Martha turned quickly from the window with a pain at her heart. The girlish face framed in fleecy wool of the black hood was so very lovely! Would he mark the difference, and regret—

She took up her work and began to turn down a hem; but she could not drive away the haunting thoughts which tormented her.

"Three years!" she murmured. "It is a long engagement; and I have heard it said that men are not patient waiters. I wonder if he has ever wished to be free again."

The ride proved of much benefit to Eva, who was brighter and gayer for days after. Seeing this, Tom took her with him frequently, never thinking that he was causing his betrothed pain by so doing. He came oftener than ever to the cottage, playing chess and cribbage with Eva at the center table in the evening, while Miss Martha sat by with her sewing and wished she were Eva's age.

"Do you think I will stand any chance of getting the school at Dodd's Corner next fall?" Dr. Edgecourt asked Eva, one evening.

"You surely don't think of applying for it?" cried Tom. "Why, the children are little heathens. They throw ink bottles and spitballs at the teacher and swear like troopers. No, no; we must not let you go there."

"I must work for myself," the girl said. "I cannot consent to remain dependent on any one."

"What will next fall come before you begin to worry," Tom said. "It's only March, now, and something better may turn up in the next six months."

Eva, as was her custom, left the room as soon as the game of chess was over. Tom always had a few minutes alone with his betrothed before leaving the cottage.

"I am so tired of boarding," he said, when, after some unimportant conversation, he rose to go. "I wish I had a home," and he sighed.

For some minutes Miss Martha stood where he had left her, one hand bearing rather heavily on the small hall table. Could he only have known what stress she laid upon his careless words! She mechanically repeated over and over the last sentence he had uttered, and remembered the bitterness of his tone. Then she walked slowly to the small parlor again, and dropping on her knees by an easy chair, buried her face in the soft cushions.

"I am no longer young," she said in a hoarse voice. "He sees his mistake, now that Eva is here to point a comparison. And yet how can I give him up! How can I offer him my hand? Could I live on without the hope that I held so close to my heart for nearly three years? But I must decide. Not now. I will wait just a little while, to be sure he has ceased to love me."

Now was Miss Martha's chance to say something tender and cheerful, but the words refused to form themselves on her lips. She was very shy, and lately she and Tom had seemed to be drifting very far apart.

Tom looked at her a moment, as if expecting her to speak; but as she did not do so he turned almost angrily from her, a dark red flush of wounded pride dying; his frank, fair face. He wished he had not uttered that longing for a home.

spending the rest of her life without Tom's love.

One evening the two young men came by invitation to the cottage to supper. Miss Martha sent them into the garden to smoke, while she, with Eva's assistance, was busy laying the table with the best damask and china. Presently she went into the parlor to get from the old cabinet which stood between the windows some silver spoons which had belonged to her grandmother. The shutters were closed, but the windows were open, and the low murmur of voices came to her ears. She knew the brothers were just outside on the rustic bench, and she was about to close the cabinet and speak to them, when she heard Tom's voice uttering words which seemed to fall on her heart like drops of molten lead.

"It is a great mistake for a man to engage himself to a woman older than himself. He is sure to repent soon or late. I was a fool, and now that I love Eva with all my heart, as I should confess to you, I wish the other was in Guinea. And what am I to do? My honor binds me to her—confound it all."

Miss Martha did not wait to hear Arnold's answer. She walked slowly and faintly from the room, and went up stairs to the spare chamber, where she locked herself in.

The evening passed very quietly. Miss Martha evidently making an effort to be entertaining; and seeing this, Tom and Arnold left very early, the latter, as Miss Martha noticed, having hardly spoken to Eva since supper. She thought this was out of respect for his brother's feelings, which had so lately been revealed to him.

The next day Tom was surprised in his office by the appearance of old Hannah, who quietly laid a letter on his desk and went out again.

The young doctor's face grew very white as he read what Miss Martha had written. Without explanation or excuse she requested that their engagement might be at an end, and said that as it would be better for her to go, she would meet for a while at least, she was going to an aunt's in another town, to stay several months. Eva would remain at the cottage with old Hannah.

For some time Tom sat gazing at the letter, as if turned to stone. Then he touched a lighted match to it and watched it burn away to ashes.

"That is over," he said, aloud. "I have been expecting it. I have seen it in her face, and yet I had not the courage to ask her about it."

It was a sultry July day, the railroad journey dusty and fatiguing, and Miss Martha was very glad to step out of the cars at Roseville. She walked slowly up the dusty road leading to her cottage. It was nearly three months since she had left home, and during that time she had neither written nor received a single letter. She had not given Eva her address, and no one knew where she had gone. She had wished to cut herself loose from the past, hoping to forget it, but she had not forgotten, and her heart had not lost its dull pain. Recollections of Tom started her as she saw the familiar streets and stores. Perhaps he and Eva were married.

"You don't mean to say that's you, Miss Martha?" cried a familiar voice, and Miss Martha paused beneath the shade of a spreading elm as Mrs. Marsh came hurrying towards her. "Well, you've come too late. Lays laughs at look-smiths, you know. It's all over—Eva's gone off with him, and they're married by this time, I haven't a doubt."

Miss Martha staggered back and put her hand over her eyes. The shock it was to her to hear of Tom's marriage showed her, to her mortification, that all hope had not been crushed from her heart, as she had thought.

"I—I expected it," she stammered. "Well, it's more than any one else did. He went off soon after you left, and no one thought to see him again. But he came yesterday, and eloped with Eva late last evening. Oh, it was wicked; it was scandalous; and the whole story is all over town. I wonder now if you know about Miss Somerby?"

"No," said Miss Martha, white to the lips.

"Well, it seems he was engaged to this Miss Somerby, a rich old maid. She is mad enough to be jilted. Somebody telegraphed to her father, and he was here this morning to learn the facts of the case."

"What! Tom engaged?" cried Martha, in amazement.

"Who said anything about Tom? You must be wandering in your mind. It is Arnold Edgecourt I'm talking about."

Without another word, without the slightest excuse, Miss Martha broke away from the hand of the friendly gossip, and almost ran down the street. When nearly at her own gate she rushed blindly against somebody, and looking up with a hurried excuse, saw—Tom.

with her, and ended by eloping with the yesterday evening. I did not imagine for an instant that you thought me in love with Eva. We both labored under a mistake, Martha. I noticed your growing coldness, and thought you were becoming weary of your engagement to a poor village doctor. You did not seem to care for love making or caresses, and I could not, of course, wish to force my affection upon you."

"I was wrong, Tom, for I do love you dearly; and then, as he took her in his arms and pressed her to his heart, kissing repeatedly the soft cheek, on which there was now no lack of color, she added, softly, "and our engagement need not be of longer duration, Tom. You hesitated to marry me while I had so little, and you nothing; but you will not hesitate now that I am rich. Yes"—as he glanced at her black dress—"my aunt is dead, and she left me \$40,000. I have suffered enough for my mistake, and what is mine is yours, dear Tom."

And Tom's tender kiss gave cheerful assent to all she said.—Boston True Flag.

He Had a Bad Memory. Mrs. Verbosity wanted a package of yeast powder the other day.

"Oh, dear," she sighed, "I shall have to send Willie after that yeast, and he has such a bad memory! I do declare I never saw such a forgetful child in my life. He torments the soul out of me. Every time I send him to the store he brings back something I didn't send him for."

Then, raising her voice, she called: "Willie!" "Yes, ma." "You were here this minute; I'm in a great hurry. I want a yeast cake down to the store, and I don't want you to forget what I send you for. I don't want baking powder, same as I got yesterday, but a yeast cake. One of them tinfol cakes, Willie."

"Yes, ma." "Did you hear what I said?" "No, ma." "Oh, you do try my patience so. Come here this minute." The boy appears.

"Now, I want a yeast cake—how came that mud on your coat? You're been playing in the dirt again; I'll tell your father when he gets home. It's not baking powder I want. Turn your coat color down. Now don't you come home with nutmegs, like you did yesterday, nor with cinnamon, like you did the day before, when you were told to get citron. Your coat is buttoned wrong. Dap't you forget, now."

The boy escaped to the street, when the anxious and prentaking matron called out from the window: "Now, don't you stop to play with those Mantrifolia boys, like you did last week, and keep out of French's back yard—do you hear? It's yeast you're going for, yeast; not turnips nor carrots nor any kind of vegetables—I got them this morning, you know. Remember, you've got a bad memory, and don't!"

And the boy, with a look of hearing. He brought back a can of preserved peaches.

He had a bad memory.—Pittsburg Post.

In The Chinese Prisons. A writer in The Chinese Times says of Chinese prisons that the amount of extortion that goes on in them is amazing. And the wardens and others display surprising ingenuity in extracting money from the unhappy prisoners. The newcomer almost invariably forgets to fee the night watchman. The consequence is that sleep is rendered almost impossible by the terrible noise which is kept up outside his window all night, and he speedily apologizes for his forgetfulness to the warden or overseer. If he is coolie who cleans out the cells he is not satisfied he collects all the insects he can find and introduces several hundreds into the apartment of his victim, who is then only too glad to call his services into requisition to get rid of them again, even at an exorbitant price. Many of the wardens and servants are criminals who have escaped capital punishment by the clemency of the emperor to mark their names for death when the list for the autumn executions is submitted to him.

This list, which sets forth the name and condition of the criminal and the circumstances of his crime, is divided into three parts. The first contains the new cases, the second those which were not marked the previous year, the third those which have escaped marking for two years. It is said that the emperor marks about eight names in ten, and that a man who escapes once is safe from subsequent marking, although he has to go down to the execution ground the two following years. The list is brought from the palace direct to the place of execution, and until their criminal names are known officials know who are to die, the unhappy victims only being sure of their fate upon hearing themselves called out to pay the last penalty. The prisoners who have escaped are imprisoned for life, but they have a very easy existence, and as they are employed in the prison and share in the extortions practiced on other prisoners they often amass considerable wealth.—London Times.

Horseshoes Made of Straw. The cart horses of Japan are very curious. There comes one along the narrow business street of Tokio now. He is led by a rope halter in the hands of a brown skinned old man, who has a flat round piece of closely braided straw big around as a good sized parasol on his head. His feet and those of his horse are shod with straw, and the straw shoes are in both cases tied around the ankles with straw rope and are made of ordinary rice straw braided, so that they form a sole for the foot about half an inch thick. These shoes cost about a cent a pair, and when they are worn off they are thrown away.

Every cart has a stock of fresh new shoes tied to the horse or to the front part of the cart, and in the country here it was formerly the custom to measure distance largely by the number of horse-shoes it took to make the distance. So many horseshoes made a day's journey, and the average shoe lasted, if any cart-ory serves me, for about eight miles of travel. It is the same with the coolies. They throw away their shoes when they are worn out, and last night when I was riding in one of these man power baby carriages my ostrich like steed stopped, threw away his straw shoes, and went barefooted. As he did so I watched the roadway and counted eight pairs of worn out straw shoes in a single block.—Frank G. Carpenter's Letter.

Fame, like lightning, generally strikes the man who is not expecting it.—Squire Hobbs.

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LEGAL. Administrator's Sale. In the district court of Cass county, Nebraska. In the matter of the estate of Mary L. Beaver, deceased. Notice is hereby given that by virtue and in pursuance of an order of license made in said matter by the District Court of Cass county on the 10th day of November, A. D. 1888, the undersigned, Albert R. Beaver, will on the 23rd day of December, A. D. 1888, at 1 o'clock p. m. at the south door of the court house at Plattsmouth, Cass county, offer for sale at public auction the following described land situated in Cass county, Nebraska, to wit: The northwest quarter of section one, town 24 north, range 12 west, north of range 12 west, subject to all liens and incumbrances thereon. Terms of sale, cash. Dated 4th December, A. D. 1888. ALBERT R. BEAVER, Administrator. 38-4

Administrator's Sale. In the District Court of Cass county, Nebraska. In the matter of the estate of Peter T. Beaver, deceased. Notice is hereby given that by virtue and in pursuance of an order of license made in said matter by the District Court of Cass county on the 10th day of November, A. D. 1888, the undersigned Albert R. Beaver will on the 23rd day of December, A. D. 1888, at one o'clock p. m. at the south door of the court house at Plattsmouth, Cass county, offer for sale at public auction the following described land situated in Cass county, Nebraska, to wit: The southwest fourth of the southeast quarter known as fractional lot seven, and the southwest fourth of the southeast quarter known as fractional lot nine, all in section thirty-six, township thirty-one, north of range twelve, and the east half of the southeast quarter of section one in township twelve, north of range twelve, and the east half of the southeast quarter known as fractional lot eleven in section thirty-five of township thirteen, north of range twelve, and fractional lot two in section thirty-one of township thirteen, north of range 12 west. Subject to all liens and incumbrances thereon. Terms of sale, cash. Dated 4th December, A. D. 1888. ALBERT R. BEAVER, Administrator. 38-4

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