

AN OLD MAID.

Of course I was an old maid; anybody in Maple Ridge could have told you that, and a good many would have said I was several years older than the old family bible affirmed.

I felt all of my 38 years and knew that the dark little face that looked back at me so soberly from the cracked mirror showed them beyond question. But what of that! I had other things to think of than that I was an old maid—many others.

There was poor Susie, our pet, the youngest of us all, who would marry, handsome, reckless Noll Dauber, who, after a wild life of only a few years, ended in a drunkard's grave and left poor Susie and her two babies to me.

Nor was that all, for Fred, our eldest, the pride of our old father and mother's hearts, must marry, too—which was well enough, only after one brief year in his city office, he, too, grew sick and died—but oh, so peacefully, so nobly!

"You'll care for my wife and baby Mary?" he said, looking at me so pleadingly, and I answered: "Yes, Fred, always."

So it isn't much wonder I looked old, since only my little dress-making shop stood between us all and starvation.

Father and mother had become so feeble they could only sit on either side of the chimney and talk of their trials and sorrows.

Susie took upon herself the care of the large household, and I've shed many a secret tear at night, thinking how wan and white she was growing, our beautiful little Susie.

What did Fred's wife do? I—that's a sore subject; no one ever said anything, but I have seen Susie shut her lips in a strange way when "the lady" swept into our simple meals and never offered to soil her white hands even to wash her own dishes or clothes.

"She's never been taught to work, I suppose," I thought; "poor thing!"

Then I bent over my sewing and sat up a little later.

Things had gone on in this way for nearly a year, until one night, when it was growing very late, Susie came in and shut the door of my shop carefully.

"What is it, my dear?" I said cheerfully, for there was a look on her face that troubled me.

"Mary," she said, sinking down at my side and laying her pretty head on my knee, "my poor Mary!" and then she began to sob so pitifully.

I had but little time to spare, for I knew Mrs. Greathouse must have her new dress by the next evening; but I dropped my needle and took her in my arms and whispered:

"What is it, my darling, tell me, won't you?"

"Oh, Mary, so good, so unselfish. I can't bear it. You are working yourself to death for me and mine. I've thought and thought and planned, and there's only one way."

"I don't understand—how hot your cheeks are! You're going to be sick."

"I'm going to die. Don't look so startled. I'm so wicked and foolish, but I can't see you kill yourself nor my precious children starve. I'm only—only going to get married," despatchedly.

Then I felt her whole body shudder.

"Yes, darling, but who?"

"I'm going to marry Mr. Caleb Leffingwell."

"Susie! you are mad!"

"No; he proposed to-night as I left the shop and I accepted him, that's all; why don't you congratulate me?"

"Because I can't for I know—oh, my darling, I know you don't love him."

"Love! I loved once and got a sweet reward. Yes, I'm in love with the old miser's money; that's honest."

"Hush! Never mind, sleep on it, pet. We'll talk about it to-morrow. I must finish this dress now."

"Mary, do stop and rest, you unselfish housekeeper. Your burden shall be lightened. I'm not half as miserable as you fancy."

But I knew what she suffered, and I sighed, for things had come to a very bad state. What with poor father down with the rheumatism and Susie's children suffering for shoes, and none of us too warmly clad, unless it was "the lady"—that is what Susie called Fred's wife to me more than once; but I could only sigh and remember that they were her old gowns.

Nevertheless it did seem hard that she and her baby should have the one spare room, and a fire, and coal so dear. But in me, I had promised. Such a rosebud as that little cooing baby was. If I'd had time I'd have cuddled it by the hour, and strange to say, the mother had called it "Mary." She never said it was for me, and I often wondered, but never asked her—for somehow all us simple folks were a bit afraid of "the lady."

It was one dull, rainy evening in February when poor Susie came to me with her pitiful story of sacrifice she had resolved to make. I remember very particularly because Mrs. Greathouse was to have a party on the 25th, the next night and I was hurried with her gown.

The gown is quite early for it, but the rich silk was all finished. I trembled a little as she scanned it so closely, but she found no fault whatever, and paid me the \$5 for it promptly. Her last words were:

"You are looking far from well, Mary; Tom would hardly recognize his old sweetheart if he could see you now. You need rest, my dear; do take some," then she passed out.

"Good advice—excellent," said Susie in a hard voice, and I was glad she had not noticed what Mrs. Greathouse said about her brother.

"I wish you had charged her \$15 instead of \$5, Mary. The dress was worth it."

"Yes, I know," I answered drearily; but even that would not have paid all the bills, and for the first time in Susie's presence I broke down and cried.

Even as I wept softly and Susie tried to comfort me, somebody entered the little shop, and bending over Susie and I dropped a letter in my lap—a great big, funny-looking affair.

"A letter! Oh, Mary! who would send you a letter?" said Susie.

"The lady" paused a moment in the shadows of the room, and I tore off the envelope, and there fell in my lap a great lot of bank bills.

"Money!" cried Susie, "money! Who—what does it mean? Oh, here's a note! Listen."

"Dear Mary: Accept a little present from a friend."

"That was all. We looked at each other stupidly.

"Who could have sent? Oh, Susie, it's a mistake!" I gasped.

"No, it is not; the letter is sent to you and is for you. I find it is just \$100. I'm so glad."

I kept the money. I needed it so sorely, and they all said it really was mine; but I felt uneasy all the time, and wondered and wondered, for we hadn't a rich relation in the world. But even that \$100 would not last forever and by and by I saw Susie looking over her old things and trying to make up her mind that the time had come when she could tell her betrothed husband she was ready. Poor, poor little Susie.

"I've set the day at last," she said. "It's to be next Tuesday." Then she began to sob.

Once more "the lady" entered and dropped in my lap another letter, and a book.

This letter was not so bulky, but when I opened it I found that it contained two bills of \$100 each.

"What—who?" I began vaguely as before, when once more "the lady" bent over Susie and I, and winding her white arms around our necks, fell into a violent fit of weeping.

"Oh, my sisters," she sobbed, when she could speak. "Do you think me blind as well as heartless? Do you think you are to do all the work and me none? Dear patient fingers!" and to our astonishment she kissed first my needle-pricked hand and then Susie's chapped and toil-marked.

"There's the book," she continued, "read it when you can. I began it when my husband was first taken ill. I fancied I could get it done in time to help him, but I couldn't. Yet he knows—he must know—how glad I am to be able to help those so dear to him."

"Florence," I said in wonder, "what are you talking about?"

"Why, my book; it is there in your lap as well as the money for it—a portion of it. I always scribbled more or less, but in careless way, until I saw the great need, and then I found I could write even better than I dared hope. I never told because I wanted to surprise you. Susie, little sister, don't dream of that distasteful marriage. I was so afraid it wouldn't come in time to save you. And Mary, gentle one, I've something for you even better than gold. I—forgive me! I found out all about your sad love story, of the quarrel long ago, and the lover in the west, I sent him a little bird with a message of your faithfulness, your noble life, and the answer came (oh, the west is not very far away): 'I'm coming.'"

I wondered why Susie, with such a face of peace and joy as I had not seen her wear for years, should look startled and step back, while "the lady"—oh, such a lady—stood between me and the door.

Suddenly she bent and kissed my hot cheek, and deftly snatching the comb that held my curls so very primly—as I deemed most becoming a staid old maid—she fled with Susie into the next room and closed the door.

I knew then why she had held herself so persistently before me, for standing on the threshold of the outside door stood a tall man, tanned and bearded.

I could not speak. I would have fled, too, but I could not move.

The tall man smiled and approached me, took me in his arms and whispered, "Is it my own little Mary?"

"And somehow in his sheltering arms I found my tongue and answered boldly: "Yes, Tom."

We call her "the lady" still, sometimes, for she is famous now, and rich, and Susie and her children live with her. The old folks have found a better home with Fred, and I cannot help but think they told him how we love his wife and of all the happiness she brought us—The Old Homestead.

A curious trap at the patent office is an imitation rat that has a piece of toasted cheese stuck on the end of a little spear that projects from his nose a short distance. When a real rat comes up to nibble at the cheese the spear jumps out about six inches and impales the unfortunate.

Old Time Epicures.

The monks and cures of France have done so much for their country in the preparation of savory delicacies as the most renowned chefs. It has been suggested that during the long season of Lent these holy men have been in the habit of relieving their privations by employing their ingenuity in the invention of pleasant foods and drinks in readiness for the return of the days of feasting. Whether there is any foundation for this inference is not positively known, but the fact remains that the clergy, from whatever cause, are capital inventors of all sorts of comestibles.

One of the largest oyster parks in the country was started by Abbe Bonnetard, the cure of La Teste, whose system of artificial cultivation is so successful that the number of oysters distributed throughout France every year perhaps a quarter are produced by the abbe. Canon Agen was the discoverer of the terrines of Nerac.

The rillettes of Tours are the work of a monk of Marmoutiers. The renowned liqueurs Chartreuse, Trappistine, Benedictine and others, betray their monastic origin in their names, and the strangest part of their production is that they should be the work of the most severe and ascetic of religious bodies.

The elixir of Garus is the invention of the Abbe Garus. The Beziers direction were first prepared under the direction of the Prior Lamoureux. The popular Bergougnoux sauce was first mingled by the Abbe Bergougnoux. The delicate Flouard cakes are the invention of the Abbe Flouard. Even the immortal glory of the discovery of champagne is attributed to a monk. To these may be added the innumerable delicacies in bonbons, confectionery and the like, which owe their origin entirely to nuns in the French convents scattered throughout the land.—Paris Cor. Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Two Steamers on a Long Race.

Steamship races across the Atlantic are common enough—more common, perhaps, than they should be—but a race merely from New York to Liverpool is a small affair compared with one which took place recently between the French steamship Salazia and the English steamship Orizaba, which had a little trial of speed between Melbourne and Marseilles, by way of the Suez canal—a total distance of some 11,000 miles.

The Salazia did not start from Melbourne until three hours after the Orizaba had sailed. She arrived at Adelaide, South Australia, at about the same time. After touching at Albany, Western Australia, together the two steamers, though both made the very best possible time across the Indian ocean, saw nothing more of each other until they had entered the Red sea.

Here the French steamer was found to be some distance in advance of the English, although they were in plain view of each other. The Englishman gave chase, and succeeded in overhauling but not in passing the Salazia, and the latter preceded the Orizaba through the canal.

The Orizaba and the Salazia kept quite near together throughout the journey through the Mediterranean. The "race" was not really a long struggle, covering the distance of more than ten thousand miles between Melbourne and Marseilles, but rather a "brush" for precedence in the Suez canal. The great ocean going steamers often journey very near together on long voyages.

Ex-Senator Bruce.

Ex Senator Bruce is by no means a bad-looking man. He weighs, I judge, about two hundred pounds. He is six feet tall and has a large, round, copper-colored face. His hair has just a slight curl to it and he keeps it well brushed. His features are half Caucasian, and half African. You could tell anywhere that he had colored blood in his veins, but you can see that he is three-fourths white, in appearance and not far from altogether so in instincts. He dresses well but not foppishly. His wife is whiter a great deal than he. She would be taken for a Caucasian by nine people out of ten. She is well educated and was a school-teacher in Cleveland when Bruce married her. She is slender, well formed and her manners and bearing are refined. The two live very nicely in Washington, and their home is within a stone's throw of Blaine's big house, which Letter rents for \$11,000 a year.—N. Y. World.

Where The Lightning Went.

Sailors are proverbial for their big yams, but they can't get much ahead of river men. The other day Capt. J. D. Parker got hold of Capt. Gibson, and he said: "Dave, you recollect when I was mate on the Yasoo and that streak of lightning struck me as I stood near the jack staff, in that terrible storm, and you all thought I was dead for sure?" "Oh, yes, very well; but where did the lightning go to, anyhow?" "Why, it went right down into my boot."

"And you never were hurt?" "No, sir, not a bit. I just took my boot off and poured the lightning out on the deck."

And the two worthies went to look at the weather map.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

FASHION NOTES.

For the Ladies.
Two ladies of Lewiston, Me., take a little walk before breakfast for their health.

Water solutions are difficult to mix with vaseline, but it is said this difficulty can be overcome by means of a little castor oil.

Another admirable stimulant for exhaustion is a mixture of five drops of chloroform with a teaspoonful of red lavender in a glass of water.

The official directory of the New York Central shows that of the 306 station agents on the road twenty-six are women.

A turtle teapot made of blue and white Owari ware, its upturned head and serving for the spout, is imported from Japan and costs \$1.

Boiling water should not be poured on tea trays, japanned goods, etc., as it will make the varnish crack and peel off.

The magnificent and wonderful frosting with which the caterer's art covers the wedding cake is now removable before cake is cut so that it may be used again.

Not Young Nor Old.

There is a time in a woman's life when she is too old for the dance and frolic of the young, and too young for the quiet corner of the old. No class claims her. She feels often like an alien from the commonwealth of womanhood. In charitable work and in social life the invisible line is passed. No one invites her now to preside at the fancy booth or hasten the sale of flowers with her gracious smiles. Neither is she asked to give the dignity of her age and position as one of the patronesses of the fair. She is laughed at if she dresses in the gay colors her soul loves, or scolded (by her family) for always wearing black.

She has no part in the play, but is quietly relegated to the position of stage setter and prompter while younger and older woman pose and win applause. Her beauty is not at its best. She has neither the fair girlish face which is the prophecy of what it will be, nor the sweet old face which is the history of what it has been. White hair does not crown her with glory, and she has lost the golden curls of her youth. The blossom has faded and the fruit does not yet compensate for its loss.

The trials of the transition state envelop her in the home. Sometimes she feels that her husband is almost deserting her for the young daughter who is the second edition of the girl he fell in love with years ago. The solving of the domestic problem has not made such drafts upon his mental and physical resources as it has upon hers. He is a comparatively young man, and no one dreams of asking him to step aside from any familiar path.

At times she wonders if she is not a childless woman. She was necessary to her little children, but her growing sons and daughters do not seem to need her; at least they do not cling to her with the tender caresses of their babyhood. Studies, teachers, classmates and embryo love affairs fill their lives so full that the mother almost feels crowded out.—Harper's Bazar.

The Happy, Careless, Motherly Woman.

But there's something white waving in the air, further down. It is on the wrong corner. It isn't—yes it is—a baby. The woman's hands are so full she can't wave anything else but the baby, and he likes it. Careless women's babies always do like all manner of irregular things, and thrive on them. And she is such a careless, happy-go-lucky woman, with her bonnet all awry, her arms full of bundles, and the baby almost upside down, on her shoulder. Such an indignant woman for a moment when the car rumbles past her, such a good natured one when she sees the mistake she has made. Over the cobble stones, through the mud, splash into a puddle she hurries, her face growing more crimson, her bang straighter every minute, and at last half falls, half plunges into the car as the conductor, angry at the delay, pulls the bell rope sharply, and we tumble on again, while the careless woman drops one bundle, sets fall two more trying to secure the first, and nearly drops the baby picking up all three.

It is safe to wager that she is as kind as she is careless, that her house looks as if two cyclones have held a courtship in it, but that you'll have the nicest home dinner if you drop in unexpectedly that hungry man ever devoured. Not the fancy ices and frills, but the cream gravies and thick pies and white bread that your mother used to make, and a welcome warmer than an August moon. The dear, motherly, careless woman, a little too stout, a little too holy, but with room in her big, warm heart for all suffering humanity. There are days when you'd rather be held to her capacious bosom, even at the risk of being smeared with the molasses one of the twins has just wiped off on her as she caught him up, because he bumped his precious head with the hammer, than be admitted to the presence of a queen.—New York Sun.

Mother Goose Improved.

Higgie—Marmaduke Clancy and Clara Vere de Vere are going to eat their loss in yon romantic nook.
Giggie—That's a case of the spoons running away with the dishes.—Harper's Bazar.

FLAX CLEANERS AND TESTERS,
MILL AND ELEVATOR MACHINERY,
REPAIRS, SUPPLIES,
Steam Outfits, Horse Powers, Belting, Pulleys, Shafting, etc.
YORK FOUNDRY & ENGINE CO., YORK, NEB.

1885-1890.
UNION LIFE OF NEBRASKA.

Solid Mutual Insurance at About One-Half Eastern Rates.
Death Claims Paid, \$48,000.00
Capital and Reserved Surplus, \$113,000.00
Insurance in Nebraska, \$2,000,000.00

FULL PAYMENT OF POLICY GUARANTEED.

Over a Million Dollars went out of Nebraska in 1889 for Life Insurance, that could have been secured at home for half the money.

It is a duty you owe your family to carry a Life Policy—every policy adds a cash value to your estate.
Reliable and Wide-awake Agents Wanted. For circulars and information, write to
A. L. WIGTON, Sec.
HASTINGS, NEBRASKA.

A Woman's Service.

"No," said the gray haired woman, "I am not going to help to decorate the graves. I am more accustomed to handling lint and bandages than flowers—that is, I was accustomed to it twenty odd years ago, when I was nursing in a Washington hospital. Oh, yes, of course, after soldiers are dead, flowers are better for them than anything else, but I cannot help laughing even now, when I think of an ill contrived fellow whose leg we were trying to save, and who was always in a bad humor except when he was eating jellies and custards. Just let anybody carry flowers to his cot if he wanted to hear him break out! 'Oh, go to thunder with them flowers!' he would say (and I can't tell you what kind of flowers he called 'em'); I thought you was bringing me something to eat. Usually, unless his leg was hurting him awfully, he tried to keep from using bad words, but the sight of flowers, when he was expecting something else, seemed to be too much for him. He had a long siege of it, but at last he limped out of the hospital on crutches, and I had a letter from him some months afterward saying he had thrown his crutches aside.

"Hospital nursing hard work? The hardest I ever did in my life. You see I went into it without any training. We army nurses hadn't been taught to spare ourselves, and we didn't. I thought at first I'd have to give up because I couldn't sleep at night for seeing the amputated arms and legs and other sickening sights that I had been among all day, but I held out to the last, although I was one of the youngest nurses in the hospital. When I came out at the end of two years' work everybody said I looked 10 years older than when I went in. I had never been very strong, and the doctor said I was too sympathetic for such a profession. I tell you it is a dreadful thing to hear men begging to be killed to be put out of their misery! Some of the patients were shamming, making the greatest ado over little flesh wounds, but these were very few in comparison with those who were really hurt.

"No, I do no nursing nowadays. The girls who are graduating every year from training schools, with their heads crammed with book learning and familiar with all the recent discoveries and improvements in medicine and surgery, would look down on a nurse who learned all she knows during the war. For the last twenty-five years I have been supporting myself as a housekeeper. In a hotel? No, I haven't strength enough for that. Sometimes I take care of a widower and his children until he marries again, which he always does too soon for my convenience, and sometimes I keep house for a fashionable lady until I go distracted with her pink luncheons and orange breakfasts and other new fangled arrangements. I consider myself a pretty good manager, but the trouble is that sometimes there aren't servants enough for the work that has to be done, so I have to fall to and help, which not only lessens the servant's respect for me, but usually brings on an attack of nervous prostration that makes it necessary for me to take a resting spell in a working women's home, though I hate dreadfully to see money going out when there's none coming in.

"Ought to have a government pension? Yes, that is what I have often been told. It is true I wasn't wounded during the war. I didn't shed any blood for the Union, but I gave it pretty much the same thing in my strength, and a pension, no matter how small it might be, would come in very well to spare my savings when I am out of work, and take away my dread of being dependent on some one in my old age. My relations wouldn't let me go to the almshouse, I know, but if I cannot save up enough for a little rest in the end I hope and trust I may die in harness. There's many a year's work in me yet, if what strength I have left doesn't give way completely; though it is discouraging to receive smaller salaries every time I make a change as the years go by.—New York Tribune.

Joe Mulhatton Talks.

Colonel Joe Mulhatton of Kentucky, the biggest liar in the United States, if not in the universe, has been a drummer for a long time. He has been a liar for twenty years or more, according to the story he told a reporter for the Times yesterday. He has had a good deal of money out of both callings. Colonel Mulhatton is an undersized man, and the shirt he wore yesterday looked like it has never seen a laundry since the day of its manufacture. Nevertheless, Colonel Mulhatton's collar was clean, and a fine stud blazed on the front of a gorgeous red four-in-hand tie. The liar's coat was linen, three shades off the black in its rustiness, but the colonel's handshake was warm, and his smile sought the reporter's better nature and the two were friends.

"I am not a liar by nature," said Colonel Mulhatton; "I make a business of it for amusement. I told my first big lie for a Louisville newspaper twenty years ago. I told of a score of mummies that were discovered in a wonderful cave in Pike county, Kentucky. Each mummy was eighteen feet long, and had red hair all over his body. The cave was three miles long and a mile wide, with a very small and almost impassable entrance. One chamber was lined with the richest of gold quartz, and in another diamonds and rubies sparkled like the stars in the firmament. People flocked to Pikeville by the hundreds, and town lots were selling out near White Post, in the northern part of the county, at \$100 a foot. Every showman in the country had agents in Pike county, and old Barnum himself was down there trying to buy the cave.

"Where I got real fame, however," said the general liar, strutting proudly before the crowd that had gathered, about him and the newspaper man, "was in that meteor story. I was talking to Bill Eads, a Louisville newspaper man, one time, and he asked me to write him a story. I told him I was out of ideas and couldn't do it. Just that minute a little meteor shot across the blue dome of heaven and it brought me an idea.

"I'll write you a story about meteors, Bill, I said, and I turned right around and got to work. Well, while Bill was talking to me of the newspaper business and the last scoop he missed, I wrote the story. The meteor covered an acre of ground and sunk about 100 feet. The people all over Texas thought the end of creation had come. I located the thing in Brown county at William's ranch, near Brownwood, and worked in a lot of stuff about the fleeing populace and a sulphurous smell that pervaded the atmosphere for miles. I said that that meteor sized and sizzled in the damp ground, and withered plantations for acres and acres around, parching the ground into fire brick for many miles.

Well, the story appeared in good season and the Associated press sent the item out. In a week there were more scientists and newspaper men on their way to Texas than the boarding houses of the state could accommodate. Some of them got lost in the mesquite brush and fed on the beans for weeks, and some of them got discouraged looking for the meteor and bought a hundred acres of 5-cent land and are living there yet, raising mosquitoes, tarantulas and chickens. I think it was the best thing for them that ever happened. The London Times, Paris Temps, Paris Gazette, Paris Petit Journal, Hong Kong Chow-Chow, and the Volksblatt of Berlin, all had men scouring Texas for that meteor. These poor fellows were afraid to go back home without the facts and some photographs, and they just stayed here. The London Times man is now running a saloon at Cheyenne, the Temp man is a barber down on Delaware street, and the Chow-Chow correspondent has a laundry on Franklin avenue St. Louis. I've lost track of the others."—Kansas City Times.

A Yankee genius has invented and patented a machine for buttering bread. The machine cuts and butters 750 loaves of bread in an hour.