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## NATURE.

I muse on yonder barren autumn field,  
Where west winds blow, birds sing,  
Rains fall, comes June, comes spring,  
Its secret many a year hath not revealed.  
There many a dewy dawn hath writ in red  
And white, and summer's feet  
Left many an imprint sweet,  
Yet something longed for hovers still un-  
said.  
Ten thousand sunsets have not wakened  
to speech  
The western slopes, nor night's  
Pale flock of stars the heights;  
The sea's kiss wins no answer from the  
beach.  
Dead, silent, nature stands before our  
eyes.  
We question her in vain,  
And bootless strive to gain  
Her confidence; she vouchsafes no replies.  
And yet, oftimes I think she yearns to  
bless  
And comfort man with sheaves,  
To please him with her leaves—  
The wildest blast hath tones of tenderness.  
And there are voices on the sea in storm  
Not of the water's strife,  
Faint tones, as though some life  
Amid the tumult struggled to take form.  
There is an undertone in everything  
That comforts and uplifts,  
A light that never shifts  
Shines out of touch on the horizon ring.  
I know, behind yon mountain's gloomy  
sides,  
There something waits for me  
That I may never see—  
Some love-illumined face, some stretched  
hand hides.  
Some spirit, something earth would half  
disclose,  
Half hide, invites the soul  
Unto some hidden goal,  
Which may be death, or larger life—who  
knows?  
—William Prescott Foster.

## "THRIFT."

His mother had insisted upon calling him Thrift. No one knew why she had given him the quaint name. Then when he was barely 2 years old she died. She left him with a great wealth of silent love, but that, like his name, could not help him much—that is, not as far as one could judge things. The neighbors said it was a cough that had "settled" that on her off. Probably the cough had been a sign to do with it, but a starved-out life of lack of affection and hard work had a good deal more.

The neighbors also thought that Mrs. Watson never had much spirit. It would seem as if they almost blamed her for dying and leaving a husband with a child barely 2 years old. They had misgivings about the boy, and they were right. Thrift was deaf and dumb. His mother had struggled against the knowledge as long as she could. When she realized it she kept the knowledge to herself with a fierce love. But the cough came and settled all the problems of life for her.

Thrift's father took her death as apathetically as he had taken all her life. Only Thrift seemed to realize that fate was still against him. He lay creeping for hours alone in the little cottage, strapping into his cot. The neighbors were kind to him. They took him in turn to their cottages, but the element of teasing children and rough handling was discordant to him. The women meant well, but it was a hard winter and money and tempers were short. Besides, Thrift's baby nature was hard to understand.

Brightness came into his life one day. It came in the guise of a little dressmaker, Jean Lawrence. She brought him a black frock. She had been busy, so she had put off the making till she had time. No one else had thought of the little mark of respect. It was a tribute to custom, but it was the one tribute of Mrs. Watson's life.

"Puir little lamb!" said Jean Lawrence as she came in. Her eyes filled with quite unexpected tears as she saw the lonely baby.

Thrift could not hear her, but something sympathetic touched his understanding, for he held out his hands. "Puir little thing," said Jean Lawrence again, and she caught him up and covered him with kisses. Then she put Thrift back in his cot, and untied the little black frock. She turned to go, for she was in a hurry.

Thrift's mood changed. His blue eyes grew dark in the intensity of his passion. He kicked and screamed. His fluffy fair hair was ruffled; he looked the picture of a little demon.

"Presarve us," said the little dressmaker. It was the first time any exaggeration of feeling had ever come into her life. She was half fascinated and half terrified by this unexpected burst. "Presarve us!" she repeated more emphatically. She never could explain afterward what prompted her, but she stepped to the cot, wrapped a blanket around Thrift, and did not stop to think till she had deposited him safely in her own house. It was characteristic of Jean Lawrence that she never reasoned out why she had done this action. It was quite as easy a matter to settle the disposal of Thrift with his father. He was only too glad to be rid of the burden.

The first clashing of wills occurred over the same little black frock. Thrift obstinately refused to have anything

to do with it. Miss Lawrence was perplexed. It would never do to dress him in colors on Sunday. She compromised by making him a white frock, with a broad black sash. It set off the child's fairness, but still more it satisfied her sense of fitness.

Jean Lawrence always thought of that episode as an epoch in her life. The next epoch was the sudden resolve of Thrift's father to go to America. Jean Lawrence lived in a state of tension till he had sailed. It seemed incredible to her that he could wish to leave his boy behind. She only saw the extreme desirability of Thrift in any manner and way. Thrift's father did not.

It was soon after this that Jean Lawrence's old lover returned to his native village. This caused more thought in the village than Jean herself gave to it. It was ten years since John Forbes and she had been going to be married, and ten years is a long time in a woman's life. Since Thrift had entered her life she was utterly oblivious of anything except her work. The more money she had the more she could do for Thrift.

Jean Lawrence had always kept to herself and no one knew why she and John Forbes had never married.

Her old mother was alive then and everyone knew she would have liked the match. John Forbes had come back grayer and older than he had gone away, but he was richer and even more able to afford a wife.

Time had not gone very well with Jean. She was thin and small always and she had had a hard life of work. Her sparse drab hair was beginning to be sprinkled with gray. She looked older than she really was. The village came to the conclusion that John Forbes "would go by her and seek a younger, bonnier woman." The two most concerned gave no cause for gossip.

John Forbes would sometimes stop as he was passing the little cottage and say a few words. There never was any allusion to past times between them. They called each other Mr. Forbes and Miss Lawrence studiously. That was the only clew either of them had that there was a mutual past between them.

On the Sundays that Jean went to church—her thoughts were always divided between the bairn at home and the psalms, to her great discomfort—John Forbes would sometimes overtake her. They talked of the sermon, then of the crops and the weather. By degrees these subjects gained an easy familiarity and only varied with the seasons.

No one was more surprised than Jean when John Forbes asked her one day to marry him. She stared at him in emotionless calm.

"Ye must gie me time," she said.

John Forbes agreed to this quite placidly. It was hard to understand what he saw in his first love in her faded and aged old-maidism. Possibly a tenacity of affection and the same instinct of faithfulness that brought him back to the little village—the little village with no pretensions to beauty or picturesqueness—kept him true to Jean. One was the home, the other the woman he had loved. He saw no reason to change because he had seen many fairer homes and younger, prettier women.

Jean did not analyze her sentiments. It was not her way. Besides, love never entered her head as far as it concerned John Forbes. She merely reviewed the advantages as they concerned Thrift. The rumor that a new and more modern dressmaker was going to set up finally settled it, and she said John yes.

The day was fixed for the second time in their lives. Jean had given up her house. She was waiting with tranquility for this new step in her life. She had quite come to the conclusion that she could do no better for Thrift. One evening John Forbes arrived. Thrift lay contentedly on the hearth rug looking at him. The last time John had been at the cottage Thrift had been in one of his passionate fits. This had set him pondering.

After this there had been several well-meant efforts at kindness on the part of his friends. They happened to coincide with his own views. They advised him to send Thrift away. Jean, they said, would neglect everyone and everything for the boy. She would wear herself out for Thrift, but not bother with anything that did not concern him.

How far he believed this or how far a man's dislike to scenes or a natural desire to have his wife's affection centered in himself had to do with his resolve he could not have told. He bestirred himself, and with infinite trouble and by some outlay he secured an admission for the child to a deaf and dumb institution.

It was this fact he had come to tell Jean. He rather wished Thrift would help him to lead up to it by a scene. Thrift gave him no help. He lay smiling impenetrably.

Jean was not quick at reading signs. "Jean," he said at last helplessly, "we'll be merrit Tuesday."

"Ay," assented Jean cheerfully. Her eyes fell naturally on Thrift and she smiled at the boy.

"And Thrift?" John added, with a suspiciously clear note of interrogation in his voice.

"Ay, Thrift," she repeated.

"Ay, Thrift," said John. Then finding this even did not progress matters he said desperately, with a snatch of humor: "Ye ken I'm no marrying Thrift?"

The old clock ticked through the room. The peats spluttered on the low hearth, in front of which on a curiously woven rug Thrift lay.

There was absolute silence for a bit. Then Jean's voice broke it.

"Then, John Forbes, ye're no marrying me."

Again there was silence.

John said in a quiet voice: "I hae made a' the arrangements for him, Jean. He will gang to a schule fa they'll teach him to read and write, and understand talk of a kind."

"Will they teach him to talk like thier fowk?"

Her tone was expressionless.

"Na, they cannae dae that."

"Then why should the bairn be bothered w' learning that'll never dae him or anyone else any gude? Tell me that, John Forbes."

"It will give him employment, Jean, and besides—"

Here John Forbes, with a man's tactlessness, undid every bit of good his arguments might have effected. He added: "Fowk tell me ye jast mak' an idol o' him, and that ye hae nae ither idea but him. A man could nae be expect'd to stan' that, and thier people kenning it."

Jean had been passing through a crisis and she was but a woman.

"And if fowk care to gossip over my affairs, John Forbes, and you care to heed them," she retorted vehemently. "If Thrift disna gang w' me nae poo'r's will tak' me to your hoose."

John was annoyed by her tone.

"And supposing I say I winna hae Thrift?"

They sat on in a strained silence.

John was too angry to move or speak. Jean had no wish, either, to break the silence.

"Ye ken this is the second time your obstinacy has come in the wye," said John, finally.

"I mind," said Jean, briefly. "But I didna mean ye to tak' it as ye did yon time," she added.

"It didna ken," replied John.

It struck neither of them that there was any pathos in the sentence—a pathos of a ten years' mistaken silence!

"Are ye sure ye mean it noo?" he asked, getting up.

"I certainly dae," said Jean, firmly.

"Then guid-by, Jean."

"Guid-by."

The instant the door was shut Jean almost strangled Thrift with kisses.

Unfortunately the practical things could not be settled so summarily.

Jean had given up her house, and she found it was let to the new dressmaker. She was not accustomed to complications in her life. Alternatives seemed to crop up and they worried her. At the same time Thrift was her one object. Everything was directed to his aim. After some few weeks she got a tumble-down little cottage about a half mile from the straggle village. It proved too far, or the "hang" of the new dressmaker's skirts proved too much for Jean's old customers. Work and pay became scant. The little dressmaker bore up proudly and bravely. She stunted and starved herself, but Thrift grew and flourished. There loomed before her always a fear of the "charity" where her boy might be taught—and no one knew at what expense of unkindness.

If the worst came to the worst she would ask John Forbes to get him in, and she would become a servant. One wintry evening the child was fretful and ailing. A knock came to the door and John Forbes entered. He did not seem to notice the extreme poverty of the cottage, nor the miserable attempt at the fire. This fact brought a rush of gratitude to Jean's heart. It was to see if these things were as bad as report said that he had come.

He took Thrift up on his knee and he talked occasionally to Jean.

"Can I dae anything for ye?" he said, suddenly. "For the boy, ye ken."

A little flush came in Jean's cheeks. She faltered her thanks.

In a rush of love for Thrift she began faintly to realize that she had not appreciated this man as he deserved. In the same moment she realized she had thrown her chance away.

No idea that she might work on her old lover's pity crossed her mind. She began timidly asking him if he could manage to send Thrift to the home he had mentioned.

"Why noo, when ye were so set against it?" asked John, with a severity that was not reassuring.

"It's circumstances," said Jean briefly.

She felt she would die rather than let John Forbes know there was nothing in the house to eat and no money. She would have risked everything but the fear of Thrift falling ill.

"Weel," said John slowly, "I'll see about it. But hoo wull ye pay me, Jean?"

The little dressmaker drew herself up.

"There'll be no fear o' that, John Forbes."

"But ye hivna tell't me in fat wye, Jean."

"In honest money, by honest work."

The pink flush had deepened into a deep crimson on her cheek.

"But I dinna want your money, and as for wark, suppose ye come and wark for me."

"Na, na," said Jean involuntarily. She had had her chance of being mistress at the farm. She could not stoop to wark for another, as she supposed he meant.

"Weel, come w'oot doing any wark." Jean looked at him in utter bewilderment.

The difference between us lay in Thrift. If he gaes awa' there's naething need hinder your coming to the farm."

"I dinna expect ye'd think I meant you," said the little woman. She was thoroughly hurt. "I'll thank ye a' the days o' my life if ye'll dae for Thrift, but I am no seeking to be beholden to you for mysel'."

"Ye'll be gay lonely w'oot Thrift."

"Ay," Jean nearly smiled because she was so near to tears at the thought. "I'll be lonely at the farm."

"Ye can mairry," said Jean. She suddenly felt she had cut herself off from every possibility by her suggestion. She had done it for Thrift all along; she would have married him for Thrift's sake, she gave him up for Thrift's sake. Now Thrift by her own act was to go away from her. And John Forbes was nothing to her. The unexpected touch of kindness had brought a rush of sympathy to her heart. She did not know it, but it had broken down the barrier that her love for Thrift had built up round her woman's heart.

"Ay," answered John Forbes slowly. "But ye maun ask me this time, Jean."

"Oh, I couldna," faltered Jean. She felt confused and trembling. She looked down.

"And I winna, nae a third time."

"I'm no fit to be a leddy noo," she murmured.

Then she looked up. John saw in her eyes a look he had not seen for more than the ten years.

"Jean?"

"John?"

That was all the love-making that passed between them, but they understood each other then.

When John went out, Jean seized Thrift and kissed him as she had done once before.

But she knew that for the first time since he had come into her life he had only the second place. She thought she hid the fact in her inmost heart, but John Forbes guessed it. He had the tact to hide his knowledge from his wife. For the tact that love brings is often the highest wisdom.—All the Year Round.

## NEW COATS AND CAPES

### SWAGGER STUFF SHOWN IN THEIR MAKEUP.

Some of the Handsome Styles that Are Out for Early Spring—Check Velvet Will Be Much Worn—Fur Is Going to Last.

Talk of the Fashions. New York Correspondence:



Who possess a coat of seal in one of the new cuts, is to advertise the fact as clearly as if you yelled it out as you went along, that you are wearing a good two hundred dollars' worth on your extravagant back. The cheaper seals are not made up into coats at all, but appear only in capes. The stuff that is to be the swagger thing for spring capes is check velvet, and it is used both for lining and for the outside. Some handsome examples are made reversible, the check velvet being very brilliant, the other side of dull woolen stuff. Other velvet capes offered for the days that announce winter's end are made double, the upper being handsomely embellished with applique of heavy lace and pointing or jet, the under one plain. The top cape should reach the elbows, the under one the hips. The fashion of mounting capes on yokes is a little gone by, but as it affords a method of elaboration it has still admirers. These have the yoke of rich lace, embroidery or costly fur, fitting just to the shoulders and a little deeper front and back. The top cape is made very full on this



BIDDING HIGH FOR LONG LIFE.

and stands straight out over the arm in epaulettes fashion. The other seems to fall straight from the yoke to the hips. This variation of the line of the under and over cape is what is not liked. Where the yoke is lace covered each cape has corresponding elaboration.

Fur is going to last very late into the spring season. Of that there can be no question, but whether it is to have the all-the-year-round vogue that dealers are now promising for it, is doubtful. It is a comfort to the be-furred woman to know that she can wear her peltry as long as it is comfortable, and it prolongs beyond ordinary limits the time for considering fur-trimmed garments. In the garments there is one result evident, and that is that stuffs of comparatively light weight are liberally trimmed with fur. In the initial picture, for instance, there is shown a tight fitting jacket of black velours, lined with thin silk, but set off with a handsome fur collar and cuffs, a muff matching them. The garment hooks under a double boxpleat in front and is ornamented at waist and throat with buttons of oxidized silver.

Fur edgings will, of course, be worn much later than collarettes, and though, like the latter, they may now match the muff carried, they will be quite acceptable after the muff has been put



THE REVERS OF SPRING.

away in clasp. Late as it is, novel forms of applying them are often seen, the dealers hoping, probably, that

some of them will strike women's fancy so strongly as to ensure their being carried over into warm weather. A striking use of them is portrayed in the second picture, in trimming a gown of brown cloth and velvet. Its foundation skirt has a wide velvet panel, the cloth being drawn away from it to imitate an overskirt, and is edged with fur at the sides and hem. At the hips there are velvet puffs that show through slashes in the cloth. The bodice is made entirely of velvet and is finished by a separate collar of brown cloth, edged with fur and also slashed to show a velvet puffing.

Some spring jackets assert their newness and deny the possibility of having



AS IF FROM A CLOUD OF BUTTERFLIES.

served in winter by being open down the entire front and fastening only at the throat. Such run to much eccentricity in revers, which are about the only possible point for displaying novelty, as the garments are otherwise simply made. An example of this style is shown, sketched in dark-blue cloth. Made with fitted back and sides, its loose reefer fronts turn back in large double revers edged with bias folds of the cloth. The standing collar and cuffs are also thus banded. The garment is lined with rose-pink surah brocaded with white flowers.

The combination of jet and chiffon in the ornamentation bodices is, of course, very far from a new idea, but some entirely novel expressions of it are current. The fourth illustration here depicts one such, light pink chiffon being draped over a fitted white satin foundation. The large revers are of black velvet, edged with jet and inclosing a big and brilliant jet butterfly. Smaller ones drape the sleeves very prettily. Below this there is an empire skirt garnished in front with black velvet points, which hang from a plain black velvet belt and are bordered with large jet beads, besides being weighted with fringes and a fancy gilt and jeweled butterfly.

Though designers hint of plainer styles in bodices, the theater bodice is still bent on being a joy forever, and all sorts of eccentric ornamentations are seen on it. One is shown herewith that is gotten up very daintily, and it can be carried out in any favored combination



A SHOWY BODICE FOR THE PLAYHOUSE.

of colors. It is made of cloth and fastens at the side, as it is alike in back and front, having an embroidered velvet yoke with collar and epaulettes to match. The plain belt and the corners of the yoke are garnished with velvet ribbon bows that perkily go straight up and down like a sheep's foreleg.

Among the semi-experimental models now shown there is one new design that is pretty sure to find favor, because of its novelty and beauty. It is a silk bodice that fits tightly all about except high in front, where a full boxpleat falls blouse-like, drooping stiffly over the belt. This pleat is finished in shirt-front fashion and down its center is worn a set of studs, diamond solitaires, pearls or any favored gem. This is something entirely new, and already gems are being set on short pins with a catch to apply on the under side of the silk. Stud holes should not be made, and the bodice may better be worn with no studs unless one can boast a handsome set.

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White dress-kid gloves with broad, black stitching and four black buttons are correct wear for dressy occasions.