

Sunny Bank Farm

FLOYD LIVINGSTON

CHAPTER I.

Far away among the New England hills stands a large old-fashioned farm house, around whose hearth stone not many years ago a band of merry, noisy children played—myself the merriest, noisiest of them all. It stood upon an eminence overlooking a broad strip of rolling meadow land, at the extremity of which was the old gray rock, where the golden rod and sassafras grew, where the green ivy crept over the crumbling wall, and where, under the shadow of the four apple trees, we built our play houses, drinking our tea from the acorn saucers, and painting our dolls' faces with the red juice of the poke berries, which grew there in great abundance.

Just opposite our house, and across the green meadow, was a shady grove, where, in the spring time, the singing birds made their nests, and where, when the breath of winter was on the snow-dusted hills, Lizzie, Carrie and I, and our taller, stronger brothers dragged our sleds, dashing swiftly down the steep hill, and away over the ice-covered valley below. Truly, ours was a joyous childhood, and ours a happy home; for never elsewhere fell the summer's golden sunlight so softly, and never was music sweeter than was the murmur of the dancing water brook which ran past our door, and down the long green lane, losing itself at last in the dim old woods, which stretched away to the westward, seeming to my childish imagination the boundary line between this world and the next.

In the deep shadow of those woods I have sat alone for many an hour, watching the white, feathery clouds as they glimmered through the dense foliage, and musing, I scarcely knew of what. Strange fancies filled my brain, and oftentimes, as I sat there in the hazy light of an autumnal afternoon, there came and talked with me myriads of little people, unseen, it is true, but still real to me. There, on a mossy bank, I felt the first longings for fame, though I did not thus designate it then. I only knew that I wanted a name which should live when I was gone—a name of which my mother should be proud. It had been to me a day of peculiar trial. At school everything had gone wrong. I preferred killing my slate with verses, instead of proving on it that four times twenty were eighty, and that eighty, divided by twenty, equalled four, and my teacher must needs find fault with me, calling me "lazy," and compelling me to sit between two hateful boys, with warty hands, who amused themselves by telling me how big my eyes and feet were. I hardly think I should now mind that mode of punishment, provided I could choose the boys, but I did then; and in the worst of humors, I started for home, where other annoyances awaited me. Sally, the house maid, scolded me for upsetting a pan of milk on her clean pantry shelf, calling me "the careless young one she ever saw," and predicting that "I'd one day come to the gallus if I didn't mend my ways."

Juliet, my oldest sister, scolded me for wearing, without her consent, her shell side comb, which, in climbing through a hole in the plastering of the school house, I accidentally broke. Grandmother scolded me for mounting to the top of her high chest of drawers to see what was in them; and to crown all, when toward sunset, I came in from a romp in the barn, with my yellow hair flying all over my face, my dress burst open, my apron split from the top downward, and my sun bonnet hanging down my back, my mother reproved me severely, telling me I was "a sight to behold." My heart came up in my throat, and with the angry response that "I couldn't help my looks—I didn't make myself," I started through the door, and running down the long lane to the grape vine, my favorite resort, I threw myself upon the ground and burying my face in the tall grass, wept bitterly, wishing I had never been born, or, being born, that the ban of ugliness were not upon me.

"Mother doesn't love me, I thought—nobody loves me; and then I wished that I could die, for I had heard that the first dead of a family, no matter how unprepossessing they had been in life, were sure to be the best beloved in the memory of the living. To die, then, that I might be loved, was all I asked for, as I lay there weeping alone, and thinking in my childish grief that never before was a girl, nine summers old, so wretched as myself. And then I fell asleep, unconscious that the daylight was fast declining, and that the heavy dew was falling upon my uncovered head.

Meantime, at home many inquiries were being made concerning my whereabouts, and when, at last, night came on and I was still away, my oldest brother was sent in quest of me. I was just dreaming that the trumpet of fame was sounding forth my name, when, alas! I awoke to find it was only brother Charlie, making the woods resound with "Rosa Lee! Where are you? Why don't you answer?" He stumbled over me as I lay, "Seizing me by the shoulder, he exclaimed, "You are a pretty bird, carrying us out of a year's growth. Mother'll scold you well for this."

But he was mistaken, for mother's manner toward me was greatly changed. The torn apron and the chewed bonnet strings were all forgotten, and in the kindest tone she asked, "If I were not cold, and why I went to sleep on the grass." There were tears in my eyes, but I winked hard and forced them back, until Lizzie brought me a piece of custard pie—my special favorite—which, she said, "she had saved for me, because she knew how much I loved it."

This was too much, and sitting down in Carrie's little chair, I cried aloud, saying in reply to the oft-repeated questions as to what ailed me, that "I didn't know, only I was so glad."

made me moan in my sleep, and that mother, attracted by the sound, came to my side, feeling my pulse, and saying, "What ails you, Rosa?" "There was nothing ailed me," I said; but in the morning when I awoke, the pain was still there, though I would not acknowledge it, for scarcely anything could tempt me to stay away from school; so at the usual hour I started, but the road was long and wearisome, and twice I sat down to rest. Arrived at school, everything seemed strange, and when Maria, the girl who shared my desk, produced a love letter from Tom Jenkins, which she had found on my side of the desk, and in which he made a formal offer of himself, I did not even smile. Taking my book, I attempted to study, but the words ran together, the objects in the room chased each other in circles, the teacher seemed to be a great way off, while between her and me was a gathering darkness which soon shut out every object from my view.

For a few moments all was confusion, and when at last my faculties returned I was lying on the recitation bench, my head resting in the teacher's lap, while my hair and dress were so wet that I fancied I'd been out in a drizzling shower. Everybody was so kind and spoke so softly to me that, with a vague impression that something had happened, I began to cry. Just then father, who had been sent for, appeared, and taking me in his arms, started for home, while Lizzie followed. "At the door father asked of mother, who met us, "Where shall I put her?" but ere she could reply, I said, "On grandmother's bed."

And there, among the soft pillows and snowy linen, on which I had often looked with almost envious eyes, and which now seemed so much to rest me, I was laid. Of the weary weeks which followed, I have only a confused recollection. I know that the room was darkened as far as possible, and that before the window at the foot of the bed, grandma's black shawl was hung, one corner being occasionally pinned back when more light was needed. They sent to Spencer for Dr. Lamb, who, together with Dr. Griffin, held a council over me, and said that I must die. I saw mother when they told her. She turned pale as death, and with a cry of anguish pressed her hand upon her side; but she did not weep. I wondered at it then, and thought she cared less than Lizzie, who sat at the foot of the bed, sobbing so loudly that the fever burned more fiercely in my veins, and the physician said it must not be; she must leave the room, or keep quiet.

It was Monday, and a few hours afterward, as Sally was passing the door, grandma handed her my dirty, crumpled sun bonnet, bidding her wash it and put it away. Sally's voice trembled as she replied, "No, no; leave it as it is; for when she's gone, nothing will look so much like her as that jammed bonnet with its chewed-up strings."

A gush of tears was grandma's only answer, and after I got well, I found the bonnet carefully rolled up in a sheet of clean white paper and laid away in Sally's drawer. There were days and nights of entire unconsciousness, and then with the vague feeling of one awakening from a long, disturbed sleep, I awoke again to life and reason. The windows of my room were closed; but without, I heard the patter of the September rain, and the sound of the autumnal wind as it swept past the house. Gathered at my side were my father, mother, brothers, sisters, grandmother; and all, as my eyes rested upon their faces, I thought, were paler and more careworn than when I last looked upon them. Something, too, in their dress disturbed me; but, before I could speak, a voice which I knew to be Dr. Griffin's, said, "She is better; she will live."

The fourth day after the crisis I was alone with Lizzie, whom, for a long time, I importuned to give me a mirror that I could see myself once more. Yielding at length to my entreaties, she handed me a small looking glass—a wedding gift to my grandmother—and with the consoling remark that "I wouldn't always look so," awaited the result. I am older than I was then, but even now I cannot repress a smile as I bring before my mind the shorn head, the wasted face with high cheek bones, and the big blue eyes, in which there was a look of "crazy Sam," which met my view. With the angry exclamation, "They'll hate me worse than ever, I'm so ugly," I dashed the mirror upon the floor, breaking it in a thousand pieces. Lizzie knew what I meant, and twining her arms about my neck, she said, "Don't talk so, Rosa; we love you dearly, and it almost killed us when we thought you couldn't live. You know big men never cry, and pa the least of all. Why, he didn't shed a tear when lit—"

Here she stopped suddenly, as if on a forbidden subject; but soon resuming the conversation, she continued: "But the day Dr. Lamb was here and told us you would die, he was out under the cherry tree by our play house, and when Carrie asked him if you'd never play there any more, he didn't answer, but turned his face toward the barn and cried so hard and so loud that grandma came out and pitied him, smoothing his hair just like he was a little boy. Brother Charlie, too, lay right down on the grass, and said he'd give everything he'd got if he'd never called you 'bung-eyed,' nor made fun of you, for he loved you best of all. Then there was poor Jamie kept calling for 'Yosa.'"

Here Lizzie broke down entirely, saying, "I can't tell you any more; don't ask me."

Suddenly it occurred to me that I had neither seen nor heard little Jamie, the youngest of us all, the pet and darling of our household. Rapidly my thoughts traversed the past. "Jamie was dead!" I did not need that Lizzie should tell me so. I knew it was true; and when the first great shock was over, I questioned her of his death, how and when it occurred. It seems that I was at first taken with scarlet fever, which soon assumed another form, but not until it had communicated itself to Jamie, who, after a few days' suffering, had died. I had ever been his favorite, and to the last he had called for me to come; and my grandmother,

with the superstition natural to her age, construing it into an omen that I was soon to follow him.

Desolate and dreary seemed the house; and when I was able to go from room to room, oh! how my heart ached as I missed the prattle of my baby boy. Away to the garret, where no one could see it, they had carried his empty cradle; but I sought it out; and as I thought of the soft, brown curls I had so often seen resting there, and would never see again, I sat down by its side and wept most bitterly. The withered, yellow leaves of autumn were falling upon his grave ere I was able to visit it, and at its head stood a simple stone, on which was inscribed, "Our Jamie." As I leaned against the cold marble, and in fancy saw by its side—what had well-nigh been—another mound, and another stone, bearing upon it the name of "Rosa," I involuntarily shuddered; while from my heart there went up a silent thanksgiving that God, in His wise providence, had ordered it otherwise.

From that sickness I date a more healthful state of mind and feeling, and though I still shrink from any allusion to my personal appearance, I never again doubted the love of those who had manifested so much solicitude for me when ill, and so watched over me so tenderly during the period of my convalescence, which was long and wearisome, for the snows of an early winter lay upon the frozen ground ere I was well enough to take my accustomed place in the old brown school house at the foot of the long hill.

CHAPTER II.

Thanksgiving! How many reminiscences of the olden time does that word call up, when sons and daughters, they who had wandered far and wide, whose locks, once brown and shining with the sunlight of youth, now give tokens that the autumnal frosts of life are falling slowly upon them, return once more to the old hearth stone, and, for a brief space, grow young again amid the festive scenes of Thanksgiving day.

I shall not speak of our feelings as we missed our baby brother, for they who have lost from their fireside an active, playful child, understand far better than I can describe, the loneliness, the longing for something gone, which becomes almost a part of their being, although at times they may seem to forget. Children's grief is seldom as lasting as that of mature years; and hence it is not strange if I sometimes forget my sorrow in the joyous anticipation of Thanksgiving day, which was then to me but another name for plum puddings, chicken pies, meringue dresses, morocco shoes, city cousins, a fire in the parlor, and last, though not least, the privilege of sitting at the first table, and using grandma's six tiny silver spoons, with the initials of her maiden name marked upon them.

On such occasions my thoughts invariably took a leap backward, and looking at grandma's wrinkled face and white, shining hair, I would wonder if she ever were young like me; and if, being young, she swung on gates or climbed trees, and walked the great beams, as I did. Then, with another bound, my thoughts would penetrate the future when I, a dignified grandmother, should recline in my armchair, stately and stiff, in my heavy satin and silver gray, while my oldest son, a man just my father's size, should render me all the homage and respect due to one of my age. By myself, too, I had several times tried on grandma's clothes, spectacles, cap and all; and then, seated in her chair, with the big Bible in my lap, I had expounded Scripture to the imaginary children around me, frequently reminding Rosa for her inattention, asking her what "she thought would become of her if she didn't stop wriggling so in her chair, and learn 'the chief end of man.'"

The Thanksgiving succeeding Jamie's death and my own recovery from sickness great preparations were made, it being confidently expected that my father's brother, who lived in Boston, would be with us, together with his wife, a lady whose reputation for sociability and snavity of manners was, with us, rather below par. She was my uncle's second wife, and rumor said that neither himself nor his home was as comfortable as they once had been. From the same reliable source, too, we learned that she breakfasted in her own room at ten, dined at three, made or received calls until six, went to parties, soirees, or the theater in the evening, and seldom got to bed until two o'clock in the morning; a mode of living which was pronounced little better than heathenish by grandma.

Mother, who was more discreet, very wisely advised her not to interfere with the arrangements of her daughter-in-law. "It would do no good," she said, "and might possibly make matters worse." Unlike most old people, grandma was not very much set in her own way, and to mother's suggestion she replied that, "Mebby she shouldn't say anything; 'twould depend on how many airs Charlotte put on."

To me the expected visit was a sore trial; for, notwithstanding my cheeks and neck were rounder and fuller than they had ever been, my head, with its young crop of short, stiff hair, was a terrible annoyance, and more than once I had cried as I saw in fancy the derisive smile with which my dreaded aunt Charlotte was sure to greet me. At last sister Anna, who possessed a great deal of taste in such matters, and who ought to have been a milliner, contrived for me a "picked chicken," as she called me, a black lace cap, which fitted me so well, and was so vastly becoming, that I lost all my fears, and, child-like, began to count the days which must elapse before I could wear it.

Meantime, in the kitchen there was a loud rattling of dishes, a beating of eggs, and calling for wood, with which to heat the great brick oven, grandma having pronounced the stove unfit for baking a Thanksgiving dinner. From the cornfield behind the barn a golden pumpkin, four times larger than my head and about the same color, was gathered, and after being brought to the house, was pared, cut open, scraped and sliced into a little tin kettle with a copper bottom, where for hours it stewed and spattered, filling the atmosphere with a faint, sickly odor, which I think was the main cause of the severe headache I took to bed with me. Mother, on the contrary, differed from me, she associated it in some way with the rapid disappearance of the raisins, cinnamon, sugar and so forth, which, in sundry brown papers, lay open upon the table.

The next morning, just as the first gray streaks of daylight were appearing in the east, I awoke, sitting, to my great joy, that my headache was gone. Rising upon my elbow and leaning far out of bed, I dashed aside the striped curtain

which shaded the window, and looking out upon the ground below, saw, to my utter dismay, that it was covered with snow. To me there is nothing pleasant in a snow storm, a snow bank or a snow cloud; and when a child, I used to think that with the fall of the first flake there came over my spirits a chill, which was not removed until the spring time, when, with its cause, it melted away; and even now, when, with my rubber boots, I dare brave any drift not more than five feet four inches high, I cannot say that I have any particular love for snow; and as from my window I watch the descent of the feathery flakes, I always feel an irresistible desire to make at them wry faces—my favorite method of showing my dislike. On the morning of which I have spoken, I vented my displeasure in the usual way, and then I fell into a deep sleep, from which I was at last awakened by the loud shouts of my brothers, who, in the meadow across the road, were pelting each other with nails, occasionally rolling over in the pure, white snow, which they hailed as an old and well-loved friend.

(To be continued.)

LIGHT AND OUR EYES

Falling Eyesight Not a Result of Civilization.

In our issues of March 8 and April 5, 1902, we noticed the newspaperish delusion that falling eyesight is a result of civilization, and that the proof of this is the increased use of spectacles, says American Medicine. We said that the saffron-colored medical journals would soon be echoing this nonsense. This has come true, and we read in our contemporaries that "falling eyesight is the deplorable and unavoidable concomitant feature of advanced civilization," that the habit of wearing glasses is the proof of this, a habit growing not only in Germany, but all over the world, and that gas and electric light have much to do with this eyesight failure, possibly, also, dust and fog, and traveling underground. The cure advocated is that "an individual should avoid pouring over small print by artificial light, except when absolutely necessary." Poor newspaperdom! To write without thinking, without any knowledge of the facts and without seeking any knowledge, is so easy that, in the stilted language quoted, it seems "a deplorable but unavoidable concomitant feature of advanced civilization." A little time ago this same writer explained that the illhealth of Carlyle was due to "the insanitary, and sedentary existence he led." He did not care to learn that Carlyle's "existence" was not insanitary and absolutely not sedentary, because he exercised in the open air the greater part of the walking portion of every day. In the same way our contemporary advises the use of the rushlights and tallow dips of our ancestors instead of our superior gas and electric lights. Spectacles, we may add, are not a proof of falling eyesight, as there is no scientific proof whatsoever that the eyesight of civilized people is falling, and there is every reason to believe that it is improving. If there were proof of falling eyesight the cure for it is not to "avoid the poring," but to get proper spectacles for the "porer."

Expeditions Work.

"Now cast your eye upon this tablecloth," continued the experienced traveler. "The cloth was large enough for twenty-four covers. It had a hem of drawn work a third of a yard wide, and the rest of the surface, excepting the spaces left for candleabra, was covered with embroidery, which stood up half an inch or more. There were twenty-four napkins, a yard square, with hems of solid embroidery. That cloth was ordered by somebody and never taken," said she. "The original price was two hundred and fifty dollars, and I got it for seventy-five. The napkins I ordered, and had to pay twenty-five dollars apiece for them. The set is worth two thousand in this country."

Japanese merchants are enterprising, and are not ashamed to seek patronage. When you land at Yokohama you will find the corridors of the hotel lined with Chinamen, runners from the dressmaking houses. They give you their cards, come to your rooms to get your orders and give you fittings, and the next day they will send the dress home. Jack ordered a broadcloth suit, with a frock coat, and it fitted him better than any he ever had in his life. It cost him fifteen dollars and it was as good as any suit he ever paid eighty dollars for on Fifth avenue."

Peanut Therapeutics.

The peanut cure for consumption is widely known and believed in. Now a Roxborough man comes forward with a peanut cure for insomnia. He says of it: "I had been a poor sleeper for five years. Finally, at the suggestion of a vegetarian, I tried the peanut. On my first attack of insomnia I ate fifty, masticating them very thoroughly. While taking this large dose, I felt a gradual drowsiness stealing over me. They have never failed of their effect."—Philadelphia Record.

Clever Street Signs.

Some of the artistic street signs now on exhibition in Paris are clever. One of them is by Gerome, who exhibits a sign for an optician's shop. It represents a Yorkshire terrier standing on its hind legs and wearing eyeglasses. It bears the label, "O pti cien," which is a good French pun for "Oh, little dog."

Population of Malta.

Malta is the most thickly populated island in the world. It has 1,300 and Barbadoes 1,054 people to the square mile.

Scandal Never Dies.—We recently heard a woman recalling a story that was forty-eight years old. (The old ones will wonder if this is "on" them.)

It is usually safe to avoid a man's

Women's Doings.

Hints to Girls.

Bedspreads of net are especially dainty and airy for summer bedrooms. Upholsterers show a heavy variety of the net for this purpose which is rather coarse-meshed. The spread should be large enough to fall over the bed on three sides and just clear the floor when finished; it should have an edge of heavy Russian lace 4 or 5 inches wide. If liked, a ruffle or valance of the net may be put around the bed. These spreads are often used over an under piece of colored sateen, green, rose or yellow.

To supplement the services of a small writing desk a deep shirred bag of heavy silk or of velvet may be fitted and attached below the table of the desk. This is useful to hold letters, etc.

A delicious tea cake that may easily give your "5 o'clocks" a deserved reputation is thus made: Reserve the white of one of six eggs, beating the yolks to a stiff froth; add five ounces of sugar and the same quantity of almonds that have been blanched and pounded fine in a mortar, with three ounces of flour, the grated rind of half a lemon, one ounce of orange peel cut very fine, a dust of ground cloves, and half a teaspoonful of cinnamon. Final

tween the two the bridesmaid should enter the room first, followed by the maid of honor and then the bride with her father, or whoever is to give her away. As in a church wedding, the ushers head the bridal procession.

Health and Beauty Hints.

A hot strained infusion of camomile flowers is useful as a lotion when the eyelids are inflamed.

Cold cream rubbed around the nails will counteract the tendency to crack and will keep the skin around the nails soft and fresh-looking.

To cure corns take white-pine turpentine, spread a plaster, apply to the corn and allow it to stay on until the corn comes off itself. Repeat this several times.

For chapped lips wring a soft linen cloth out of hot water in which a little borax has been dissolved and press to the mouth, repeating the operation several times daily.

A good remedy for sleeplessness is to wet a towel and apply it to the back of the neck, pressing it up toward the base of the brain, and fastening over this a dry cloth to prevent too rapid evaporation. The effect will be found prompt and pleasant, cooling the brain and inducing a sweet

MRS. H. A. PHILLIPS.



Mrs. Phillips was recently elected president of the Chicago Culture Club.

ly the single beaten white is quickly stirred in and the cake baked in small round pans.—Harper's Bazar.

Beauty, Tact and Grace.

Mrs. Laurence Townsend, wife of the United States minister to Belgium, is one of the most popular American women in Europe. Recently while on a visit to England she was a guest of the King and Queen, whose admiration and high esteem she possesses, and later in London she scored success as a musician. She is a composer of no mean ability and plays the piano well.

Mrs. Townsend is a native of Philadelphia. She possesses beauty, tact and grace and is popular in the diplomatic set at the Belgian capital. She takes a deep interest in struggling American musicians abroad and has often helped them in the line of their studies and in other ways. Her home in Brussels is famous for its hospitality, the brilliancy and wit of the hostess attracting to it noted personages. Among her particular friends in high places are the Prince and Princess of Pleas.

Wedding Etiquette.

If you cannot be present at the wedding reception of your friend you should send your cards to the bride and bridegroom and also to the bride's parents, or to whoever invited you to the wedding reception. If you attend the reception you should leave your cards at the house. Should the bridegroom be an intimate friend it would be both kindly and courteous to send a present to the bride—not necessarily an expensive gift—with a note of congratulation and good wishes.

It is not necessary for the bride to provide carriages for the guests at the wedding unless the guests come from a long distance, and carriages must meet train. Bridal veils should always be worn unless a bride wears a traveling costume. Tulle veils, absolutely plain or finished with lace, are the most becoming of all. The veil should be long enough to reach within a short distance of the hem of the skirt. It is always a little difficult to arrange for a bridal procession when there is a maid of honor and only one bridesmaid, but in order to mark the distinction be-

and peaceful slumber. Warm water is better than cold for the purpose. This remedy will prove useful to people suffering from overwork, excitement or anxiety.

Children in schools should be carefully watched in order to guard against troubles with the eyes, as shortsightedness is becoming yearly a more common defect. They should not be allowed to hold the books nearer the eyes than fourteen inches, and must not stoop over their work.

The "no-soap-on-the-face" fad would win more adherents if so many of its advocates did not carry on their faces more or less blackheads—the very thing that cold water and "no soap" are supposed to banish. There are without doubt some skins so tender that a smart scrub with a brush, warm water and soap roughens and breaks them. There are also many young women living in the country who have charming complexions notwithstanding that cold water and hard water at that is their only cosmetic. It is plain, however, that for most women who live in a large town, where dust and grime are rampant, soap in some form is a necessity if they would keep their faces clean. Plentiful bathing with cold water after the face bath with complexion brush and soap is a necessity, but taken by itself it generally works mischief.

Easy Way to Clean House.

A systematic way of cleaning avoids confusion and at the same time makes the work much lighter. For instance, one or two days can be devoted to the cleaning of beds; another day to the cleaning of windows and taking down the soiled draperies which can be washed and ironed on the following day. After this is done, a day should be set apart for the brushing down of walls and freeing pictures and mirrors from dust and dirt. This work can be followed by what is necessary in the way of whitewashing, papering and painting. Then comes the floors. If you are fortunate enough to have them polished or painted, a day can be utilized in having them cleaned and freshened. Where carpets are used it is an excellent idea to have them taken up and purified from the winter's dirt. The expense is not large and it gives the satisfaction that one's house is more sweet and healthful.

An electric carpet beater is to abate the spring fever.