

THE FARMER'S WIFE.

Bird-like, she's up at day-dawn's blush, In summer heats or winter snows; Her veins with healthful blood atush, Her breath of balm, her cheek a rose;

I love to mark her matron charms, Her fearless steps through household ways, Her sunburnt hands and buxom arms; Her waist, unbound by torturing stays;

Homeward (his daily labors done) The stalwart farmer slowly plods, From battling, between shade and sun, With sullen gloom and stubborn frowns;

But lo! the height of pure delight Comes with the evening's stainless joys, When by the hearthstone spaces bright Blend the glad tones of girls and boys;

Ye dames in proud palatial halls— Of lavish wiles and jeweled dress, On whom, perchance, no infant calls (For barren of your lovelessness)—

MRS. YOUNG'S SACRIFICE.

The autumn winds had begun to blow chilly; the dahlias and asters—those flowers of a departing season—turned their hardy faces full toward the chill air, and refused to believe that summer was, indeed, quite over, and winter near at hand.

Mrs. Young sat in her tidy kitchen, with her work for once lying idly on her knee. Her fingers, which still held the needle, were pushing it, absently, in and out the folds of her large, white apron, while her eyes stared vacantly out at the dahlias and asters, without noticing that they were there.

The kitchen was a model of perfect cleanliness and good order. From the neat rag-carpet that covered the floor to the simple white curtains, with their dainty edging of home-knitting, everything spoke of busy hands and simple domestic taste.

Mrs. Young herself was in keeping with the room. A smooth-faced, brown-haired, placid-browed woman, in whose whole aspect was written the story of an honest, pure, helpful life; but to-day a cloud rested upon the clear white forehead, a droop was noticeable about the quiet mouth, and the calm brown eyes had red and swollen lids, which told plainly of a mind disturbed.

"It's too bad!" she said aloud, addressing the flaunting flowers; "I don't know how I can refuse, but I don't think it's just, and I never shall! I have worked hard, and have done my very best, and it's no more than right that I should enjoy the fruit of my labors after all these years!"

"Mother Young never liked me, never!" she continued, still aloud. "When we were first married, and John brought me home, she was never tired of laughing at every little blunder, and telling John that I was about the dumbest hand at housekeeping she had ever seen, and seemed to care for nothing but to fix up!"

"Of course I was awkward, for I never did anything but teach before I was married; but she might have told me how to do better, instead of laughing at me. And when Georgie was a baby, why, I believe she fairly hated me because I would put little white dresses on him instead of the horrid red calico ones she used to dress her boys in; I couldn't help it! Goodness knows, I worked hard enough to make them and keep them all clean; but I would have worked harder still, before I would let my dear little baby look like such a fright!"

"I don't see how I can be expected to love her very much, even if she is John's mother! And to think of her coming here to make it her home! I can't bear it! I can't! I can't!"

Tears filled the brown eyes once more, and would, perchance have been but the first drops of a heavy shower, had not a sharp click of the garden gate caused her to look hastily out and as hastily dry her eyes.

"Dear me!" she said, folding her work up neatly, and sticking the needle carefully on the red flannel tomato cushion, and winding the thread securely around it, placing the whole in the capacious work-basket. "there are Georgie and Jimmie home from school already! John will be coming in from the mill soon, and tea won't be ready if I don't hurry."

So Mrs. Young donned a clean checked apron and lighting a fire in the cook stove, that shone like a black diamond, began to bustle around prepar-

ing tea. George and Jimmie had not entered the house when they came from school, but had gone around the house and directly to the mill, where their father was at work. Tea was nearly ready when father and sons entered together.

"Well, mother, how goes it?" was Georgie's salutation; while Jimmie's first question was—"Isn't tea 'most ready?"

"Gently, boys!" remonstrated the father, smilingly; "Julie, you will have to shut these boys up unless they keep still; they make more noise than the mill," and Mr. Young hurried into the washroom to bathe his handsome, honest face and brawny hands, and brush the luxurious crop of hair, which time had begun to sprinkle with silver, but not to rob of its richness and curl.

Ten minutes later, and the family was seated around the cosy table, partaking, with the good appetites of perfect health, of the light, white bread, the firm cool butter, slices of ham, home-made cake, and wholesome canned fruit.

"It seems to me, Julie, your bread grows better and better," said Mr. Young, helping himself for the third time.

"And seems to me, mother, these plums are the very best plums in the whole world," said Jim, with his mouth full.

"It's my opinion," remarked Georgie, "that mother does everything just right!" whereupon Mr. Young and Jim nodded, in perfect concurrence with that opinion.

Mrs. Young's face flushed with pleasure, and the rebellious thoughts that had been her guests all day retreated into the background; for where is the really good woman who can listen to merited praise from husband and children without having strength renewed to fight the battle of life.

Tea over, Mr. Young and the boys went out to see to the horse and cow, and Mrs. Young busied herself clearing the table, and putting cups, plates, knives and forks, back in their places once more.

"Poor old John!" she thought, "he looks worried and tired; I suppose he feels anxious about his mother. Well, after all, she is his mother, and I ought to be willing to do what I can for him; for John is all the boy she has, and even if she is a little queer and trying, I guess I can get along for John's sake. What if I had but one boy, and some woman should come between him and me, and refuse in my old age to give me a chair in the chimney-corner—how should I feel? I do hate to have my home changed, and its peace disturbed; but it seems to be my duty—so I shall do it."

When John and the boys came in from the barn, the lamp was lighted, and the table with its bright red cloth looked inviting, and so did Mrs. Young's cheerful face; and the magazine was read aloud, while "mother's" busy fingers flew rapidly, and the homely useful stocking grew as the evening waned.

After the boys had bidden their parents good-night, and gone lumbering noisily up stairs, Mr. and Mrs. Young sat for some time silent. Mr. Young was buried in thought, and Mrs. Young was watching him. At last she spoke: "John," softly, "I think you had best bring mother right away—I'm willing."

John turned quickly and looked at his wife keenly. "Why, Julie, what has turned your tune? I thought you didn't want mother here."

"Well, I didn't, John; but I've been thinking the matter over, and it seems to be my duty, and so don't let us talk about it any more."

"It will be a hard winter, Julie," said her husband. "I shall be more than usually 'hard up.' What with paying for the new saw and belting, I sha'n't have much money to spare. Mother never did treat you right, I must own, and she is a little trying still; so think well of it, little woman. If it's going to make you unhappy to have her here, why she will have to go and board with Uncle John on the farm; I can't afford to have your home destroyed, even for mother."

"I have thought it all over, John, and we will do our best; so just go over to C— to-morrow and bring her home."

It was a sacrifice. Every one who knew how unhappy Julie's early married life had been, knew it was. John knew it, at least, and fully appreciated his wife's sterling sense of honor. A big lump arose in his throat as he looked fondly at her, and remembered her trials in days gone by; and a suspicious moisture dimmed the brightness of his kind, dark eye, as he stooped and kissed her, without a word.

But she understood. Oh, yes, she understood, and a little bird began to sing in her honest heart, and the voice of complaint was silent and ashamed.

The next day John drove over to C—, and at noontime returned with his mother, a woman large and stout, but prematurely helpless from a stroke of paralysis, which rendered her movements somewhat slow and labored.

I have heard it somewhere stated that stout people are usually amiable, and only the thin and small are sour of visage and fretful of temper. Be that as it may, Mrs. Young was certainly stout, and just as certainly owned a peevish and dissatisfied expression, which in no wise belied her disposition. Husband and children had felt the full discomfort of her words; and Julie being a lawful and legitimate victim, had been made to smart keenly. But that was all over long ago.

be a little cold; the days are getting chilly, so I had this fire built. Come and sit down in this comfortable chair, and I will take your things up stairs."

"Goodness, Julia," said the old lady, sharply, "don't make such a baby of me; I'm not quite a child. It's not cold at all; I should roast before that fire. Where are you going to put me? I'll go to my room and put my own things away."

"Oh, if you prefer to go up stairs, come, and I will show you," and with no outward show of displeasure Julie took a shawl over her arm, a satchel in her hand, and led the way. "We fixed up this room for you because it was sunny," she said, cheerfully, placing the shawl over a chair, and setting the satchel on the table. "I thought, and so did John, that you would like this best, because it is so much warmer, and looks out on the mill, where you can see John almost every day. Can I help you?" she added.

"No, thank you; but you may send John to open my trunks."

So Julie withdrew, a little disappointed at the result of her first efforts, but in no wise discouraged; for John gave her such a smile as he went whistling up to unstrap the trunks, that fifty mothers-in-law with fifty bad temper apiece, could not have prevailed against it.

The days and weeks passed on. Winter came, with its fierce winds and drifting snow. The cold was intense. Old Mrs. Young seemed to feel the severity of the weather keenly, and to grow more feeble and helpless; the stairs were hard to get up and down, and the hall was cold and gave her a chill, coming from her warm room. Some days she was too unwell to venture down stairs at all, and on such occasions the whole family was made to feel the full weight of her afflictions.

In vain did Julie cook tempting dishes, and serve them in person, mounted upon her best "waiter," and covered with the whitest and daintiest of napkins; the old lady was lonely and cross, and refused to see the real goodness that prompted the kind deeds. If the sharpness of her tongue was somewhat blunted by time and the ills that flesh is heir to, the peevish selfishness of her disposition had in no wise improved, and Julie's best efforts were scantily crowned with success. Indeed, so unkind were the criticisms sometimes made, and so ungracious the exception of the most painstaking attentions, that poor Julie's eyes were often red with the little "weeps" she wept; but she kept up good heart for John's sake, and shut her lips tightly that no rebellious word might escape, and kept on trying and trying, thus keeping a purpose steady and true before her, and driving out the little devils of regret that spring up, and follow unguarded steps to torment further on.

"I will do my best to make mother comfortable," she would say. "I said I would, and I will not give it up."

One cold night, after the boys had gone to bed, Julie sat for some time, her chin resting on the palm of her hand, her elbow on the table, and her eyes fixed on vacancy. At last she spoke: "John! I've been thinking about moving mother down stairs; what do you think? It's hard for her to get up and down stairs, and she does not like to be left alone much; she likes to know what is going on."

"Goodness! Julie! Down stairs! Why, where would you put her?" John was so much astonished that he spoke in short gasps.

"I thought I would fix up the parlor for a family sitting-room, and give mother the bed-room off it—the room is quite large, and she could be alone, or with the rest of us, as she pleased."

"But the parlor is the pride of your heart, Julie!" remonstrated John, still too much astonished to say much.

Mrs. Young sighed, softly. "Yes, I do like to have my parlor nice, of course; but after all it does me but little good, for coal is so high, I can't afford to have it warm all the time, and so when anybody comes, they have to come into the sitting-room any way, and so I thought," with just a little quiver in the clear voice, "that we might save one fire by bringing mother down, and make her much more comfortable."

And so the matter was settled, and the very next day the plan was put into operation.

The parlor carpet, the only Brussels the house afforded, was taken up and packed tenderly away, and a bran new rag one was brought forth from the store-room, where it had been placed to await spring and the nice, clean sitting-room, and placed on the floor. The best table was covered in an old bed-quilt and carried tenderly to the garret, and a more substantial and useful member of the same family was brought into service. Things were changed and arranged, till at last almost everything was ready. Then grandmother was enticed into the kitchen under some pretext, and her pet chair, bed, bureau and general belongings were transposed and fitted into new places.

George lighted a fire in the big self-feeding stove, and Jim reappeared from the mill with a little bench, which he had covered with some pieces of carpet for grandma's feet.

When the room was warm and everything looked just as cosy and comfortable as possible, old Mrs. Young was brought in to inspect the room—having been kept in profound ignorance of what was going on.

"Well, I do say," was her first exclamation, "you might have waited till I was dead and gone before you took my chair away from me, Julia Young, or at least have asked for it, instead of snapping it out of my room when my back was turned."

here! this is your bed-room," opening the door and disclosing the neat, cheerful room, with its inviting-looking bed, "You are to sit here in your own easy chair whenever you like, and when you are tired you can go in here, and be quiet and by yourself. It will be nice and warm, for I have had the pipe put through so you might be more comfortable."

For a moment the old lady was speechless. The immensity of the sacrifice appealed to her homely, wifely thrift as few things could have done. The tears stood in her sharp eyes as she held out her hand to her daughter. "Julia," she faltered, "you are a good girl, and that's a fact, and I'm a cross old woman; but I'll try and not bother you more than I can help. You have given up your best room for me, and I shan't forget it, for it's more than I would have done when I was young for any human creature."

This was a wonderful concession, and Julia was more than repaid, for had she not, after all these years, at last found the way to that heart which she had so long striven to soften and comfort?

It was a pleasant evening. Everybody was happy. John looked at his wife's smiling face, and smiled, too, and then to his mother, sitting in the cosy corner, looking more peaceful and content than he had seen her for years; and a feeling of thankfulness, that was like a prayer, went up from his heart, and every trace of care smoothed itself off his face, and hope, and trust, and love, shone there instead.

It was not long before the neighbors heard of the "queer doings" up at "the Youngs," and so after a week, friends began to drop in to see about it; for that woman should actually give up her parlor, and take to living in the best room, was almost beyond belief, and required the evidence of one's own eyes.

One evening, just after the bright student's lamp had been lighted, and John had begun to read the weekly paper aloud, while his mother knit, and his wife busied herself with some fancy work, there came a double knock at the door, and Mr. and Mrs. Tucker came in.

"How do you do! Miss Young," said the caller, shaking hands, first with one lady then with the other, "I heard you were moved in your front room; but lor! I just thought, like as not, 'twasn't so; you can't believe all you hear, no way; but I see it was so this time—you do look awful nice! Jed," to her husband, "don't Miss Young look just kinder stylish here?"

"Well, yes," answered Jed, "I think she does. 'Twas so bright here," he continued, turning to his host, and frowning a little, as though he felt it his painful duty to remonstrate. "'Twas so bright here, as we come up, that we didn't know Sarah and me didn't, but you had a party!"

"Our lamp does give a nice light, but it is so much pleasanter; and as John likes to read, we think it is better to have a good lamp rather than a bad one," explained Julia.

"What are you making?" inquired Mrs. Tucker, whose sharp eyes had detected the work-basket, with its bright colors.

"Only a little table-cover for mother's Bible-stand," said Mrs. Young. "But don't you think that is a sinful waste of time?" persisted Mrs. Tucker, with a pious raising of her watery eyes.

"Where are your boys?" inquired Mrs. Young, not appearing to hear the question.

Mr. Tucker's face darkened, and Mrs. Tucker's settled into a pucker of annoyance.

"They're in the street," said he with some warmth; "I don't know what I am going to do with them boys! I've trounced them again and again, but it don't seem to do no good—they will run to every show in town. Every night as soon as they git their supper, they're off somewhere, instead of staying home."

"You asked me about my work," said Julia, turning to Mrs. Tucker, gently. "Let me show it to you—see, here is a bird, here a dog, and here is a bunch of cherries. Now let me tell you how we manage. This piece of cloth is a piece of my old circular cloak, and these things I am sewing on, George draws off on paper and Jim cuts them in flannel, and I sew them on. You know, my George is quite an artist, and he designs, while Jim and I carry 'em out his ideas."

"Now here are these cherries; Jimmie cut them out of a piece of red cloth I had, and George drew the leaves, and Jimmie cut them out of this piece of green cashmere that was left of my dress. This is what we call a family table-cover, and we all help make it—even John helps; his part is to find the pieces out of the scrap-basket, ready for Jimmie's scissors. Do I think it a sinful waste of time? No, indeed! I think it's the nicest thing in the world, for it keeps the boys home and interested, and teaches them to be helpful at the same time."

"Where are the boys? I've not seen them," said Mrs. Tucker, a little dashed. "They went over to Mrs. Foster's for me; they will be back soon—here they are now!" she continued, as two pair of springing steps were heard hurrying up the walk, and a moment later George and Jimmie came rushing in.

for grandma, even before her guests were served.

"You will try an apple, won't you?" she said to Mr. and Mrs. Tucker, who looked on with some disapproval.

"The boys wanted me to go down to Bennett's, but I knew you would have something home, and I told the boys I wa'n't going to spoil my home hour for none of them," said George.

"I don't see," said Jim, taking an enormous bite out of a 'Northern Spy,' "what boys want to run around the streets for, and hang about the hotel, when it's so awful nice at home. I guess the other fellows' mothers aren't quite as nice as ours!"

Mr. Tucker heaved a deep sigh, and took a third apple. "It's very pleasant," he said, "but it costs money."

"There are some things money can't buy," quietly remarked Mrs. John.

"What is that?" demanded Jim.

"Good, honest boys!" answered the mother, with a proud glance.

"A good, sensible, loving mother!" said a voice from grandma's chair, "and that's what Julie is, and no mistake!"

Mr. and Mrs. Tucker exchanged glances, for they had heard that the old lady and Mrs. John didn't get along very well.

After the evening was over, and Mr. and Mrs. Tucker were plodding their way home, she said:

"Jed! it was awful pleasant there, wasn't it?"

And he said: "Yes, it was; and I wish our boys would stay home like those Youngs do."

And so the conversation dropped, but Mrs. Tucker pondered for three days about turning her parlor into a sitting-room, and Mr. Tucker proposed to his astonished boys to stay home and try to draw some dogs and cats on paper; but as the first plan was never carried into effect, and the second was lost by a large majority, the Tucker family remain about the same.

But others, less dull, saw and caught the spirit that pervaded that happy home, the spirit of self-sacrificing love and mutual concession; and those who understood respected, admired and imitated. Homes grew brighter in the little town, with a desire to emulate that brightest of homes, and art—crude, faulty, almost grotesque, but still art in embryo—put forth tiny sprouts, and proclaimed that at least the germ was there, and promised fair things to those who should seek; for those who seek for the good, the true and the beautiful, always find it.

Curtains, brackets, table-covers and cushions grew apace, and presently books and pictures appeared in homes where few had been. George developed such a taste for drawing that a class was formed, and John, good, honest John, proposed a reading club, and grandma seconded the motion, and out of it grew a class in elocution, which was the pride of the little village.

And so the long, cold winter passed—a more enjoyable winter than Julia had seen for years. Grandma was no angel, but she understood and appreciated, and that was quite enough.

When the spring-time came, and the sweet scent of the blooming trees came wafting in at the open windows, old Mrs. Young passed gently away—with her hand clasping tenderly that of her faithful daughter-in-law, and her last words, words of praise to her: "Julie, you made my closing months happy and peaceful, God bless you."—Godey's Lady's Book.

Rules for Riding.

In mounting, face the near side of the horse. The near side is the side nearest yourself. If you stand on the right side of the horse, which is the wrong side, when you mount, you will face the crupper. Then everybody will know that your name is Johann Gottlieb Ernsiefergler.