

UNCLE HUGH'S SECRET

The way was long and tedious, the day warm and oppressive, and I wearied almost beyond endurance. If Uncle Hugh had had his way, every visitor to Mount Graham would have come all the way by carriage, but fortunately it was beyond even his power to enforce that. What he could do he had done, however. Several years before, there had been a prospect of having a railway station within ten miles of the place. The very idea made Uncle Hugh frantic. Tooth and nail he fought it, and, alas, was successful. The railway was turned aside, and though the struggle had left him straightened in circumstances, almost impoverished, I do not believe that he had ever felt one regret.

As the carriage swayed and jolted along, and the old coachman nodded on his box, with full faith in the time-tried fidelity of his fat horses, I tried to beguile the tedium of the way by recalling the incidents of the summer which I had spent with Uncle Hugh in my childhood.

Mount Graham was a quaint, old-fashioned place, built long before the Revolution, and the queer stories which were told about it had been the romance of my childhood. Of course it was peopled by ghosts of every shape and hue. There must have been a regular colony of ghosts, for there was one devoted to every spot in the house from cellar to attic. There was the spectral carriage, which was heard, but never seen, to stop at the front door in the middle of the night. A British officer haunted one bedroom, and a White Lady another. (It would be interesting to know whether they ever met, and upon what terms they were in private.) Black Nancy held possession of the garret, where she still groaned and clanked her chains as she had done a hundred years before when she was a living maniac. Indians and negroes had played a part in the early history of the house. It was before the Revolution, when the country was still an unbroken forest, that old Colonel Graham conceived the idea of building a homestead here. He went himself to select a site, and left a gang of black men behind him, with provisions enough to last through the summer and autumn. But, alas! the winter came that year with unprecedented suddenness and severity, shutting in the poor black men to what seemed certain death.

Vainly were exploring parties sent to their relief. The cruel cold baffled all efforts, and the negroes were perforce, left to their fate. In the spring Col. Graham went to the scene of the tragedy. He expected to hear only the moan of the forest and the dash of the waterfall. He heard these indeed, but mingled with them were the ring of hammers and the clamor of cheerful voices. He expected to find ten moldering skeletons, perhaps with the mark of the cruel tomahawk upon them. He found instead ten of the fattest and jolliest darlings that his eyes ever rested upon. Instead of fighting the Indians they had fraternized with them, and as soon as the weather allowed red and blackmen went cheerfully to work upon the new houses. And that was why ghostly negroes and Indians stalked amicably through hall and corridor.

The house was a plain one enough—a long, low, rambling building, with a piazza whose roof extended above the second-story windows, wonderfully shaded with grape-vines and trumpet-creeper. Inside all that was queer and cramped, according to our modern ideas. The rooms were tiny, and opened oddly out of each other by narrow folding-doors. The ceilings were low, some plain, others crossed by huge beams. There deep-cushioned window-seats in the small-paneled windows, which still bore upon their faithful transparent panes the same old-fashioned glass as fresh as the day they were cut. And there was not a decent closet in the house. But Uncle Hugh never could be made to see it.

"It served my fathers, and will serve me," he said, and never could be induced to make the slightest alteration. The furniture suited the house. There were great hair-cloth-covered sofas with frames of solid mahogany, some with brass trimmings, others curiously carved into the form of scaly dragons. There were bureaus with claw feet and brass handles on the drawers, and great clumsy four-post bedsteads, with heavily carved legs and shrouding curtains. The tallest man could not open the upper drawers of the bureaus or step into the beds unaided. Therefore step-ladders were provided, small but massive mahogany affairs, neatly carpeted, and made to serve a double purpose, as the top lifted up and showed a receptacle for night clothes. There were stiff-backed chairs and spindle-legged tables, tall slender candle-stands, and quaint little work-stands, with fluted sides, and faded satin bags suspended beneath, and all the rest of the odd old furniture, which in these days would set a collector mad with longing, but at which we privately turned up scornful noses.

There was not much fault to be found with the garden, for all was prim and old-fashioned. Never were box borders so tall and trim and glossy. Never were limes and catalpas so fragrant as those which overhung it. Never were there such beds of lilies-of-the-valley and violets and periwinkle as grew at their feet.

In June it was a true garden of delights, when the catalpa showered its delicate, tea-like fragrance from all its violet-veined bells, and the limes rained scent from their golden tassels, and the roses made the place glow with their splendor, as they rioted everywhere. Later came larkspur and sweet-pea, sweet-william and pimpernel, hollyhocks, stately and dusky, wall-flowers, purple pansies, stock-gillies, and all the rest of the dear old floral friends. No modern plants were ever allowed in Uncle Hugh's domain.

There was one spot which always excited our curiosity. It lay exactly in the center of the garden, and equaled in space four or five of the flower beds. For years no spade had touched it, and it was a mere tangle of weeds, in curious contrast with the rest of the trimly-kept garden. Every one wondered about it, of course. A few were even bold enough to ask questions, but met only a stony stare or at best a polite evasion from Uncle Hugh.

My first specific remembrance of this plot went back to the day when Philip and I decided that our happiness and well-being required that we should have a garden of our own. Philip was Philip Graham, Uncle Hugh's great-nephew, who, with his brother and sister, was also spending the summer at Mount Graham. This uncultivated spot struck me as entirely suitable for a garden, and we went to work at it with a will.

"How pleased Uncle Hugh will be when he sees it!" said Philip, as we paused a moment to rest.

Just then Uncle Hugh came in sight—a stately figure in the dress of his youth, to which he still clung. He was walking with his head bent down, and his little queue stuck out curiously above his high stock. As he came near us he looked up, and at sight of our occupation an expression which we had never seen before flashed over his face. It was a mixture of surprise, indignation, and incredulity, curiously blended with what seemed almost like terror.

"What are you doing there, children?" he cried, in a stern voice, such as we had never heard from him before. "Come away this instant. Never set foot in that spot again. Do you hear?"

"But why, Uncle Hugh?" asked Philip, standing his ground boldly. "Never mind why," said the old man, stamping his foot. "Come away this instant, and never go there again—never."

We came away, too thoroughly frightened at Uncle Hugh's most unaccountable outburst to think of rebelling. Two days later a stout fence surrounded the place. Philip and I were deeply hurt, for it was the first time that Uncle Hugh had ever, by word or deed, shown the slightest distrust of any one of us. We heard him murmur as he looked at the fence: "The children could hardly have found out yet. But they will grow older, and—Yes, it was safer."

The next scene in that visit which I remembered well was the rainy day when we children had to amuse ourselves within-doors. A game of hide-and-seek was in progress, and Philip was the seeker. Nanny and I went off together, and the place in which we elected to hide was under Uncle Hugh's great four-post bedstead. Nanny lifted the ruffled valance carefully, and I crept in, whacking my head violently as I did so against some long black object thickly studded with brass nails.

"A treasure-box," said Nanny, who was always romantic. Just then a flash of lightning lit up the room. Through the chink in the valance the light fell upon the box, and I scrambled out with a yell of terror. Had it been ghostly, I should have thought little of it, but a coffin was a real tangible, blood-curdling horror. We flew down-stairs, our eyes starting from our heads, and plunged into the very arms of Philip. Our story burst at once from our trembling lips, and Philip listened with the overpowering gravity of his twelve years.

"It's queer enough," he said when we had finished; but I'll tell you what it is, you'd better not talk about it. People say now that Uncle Hugh is a little cracked, and if they knew this whew! how they would go on! He's a bully old uncle to us, and we're bound to stand by him through thick and thin. So mind, not a word to anybody."

Nanny and I promised faithfully, and I believe we kept our word. "Uncle Hugh," said Philip, a few days later, "do you know there are chicken thieves about?"

"Chicken thieves?" said Uncle Hugh. "And pray how do you know that, Master Philip?"

"I reckon you'd know it too if you'd been out this morning," said Philip. "There are tracks all over the place, and holes dug."

"Chicken don't grow underground like potatoes," put in Charley, contemptuously. "They're no chicken thieves. But I'll tell you what it is, Uncle Hugh. It's some good-for-nothing loader digging for treasure. It's all over the country that Capt. Kidd's treasures are buried here. Or else that the old Grahams buried their plate and jewels in the revolution and forgot to dig them up again. People don't seem quite sure which, but they'll take their oath it's one or the other. And since you fenced in that place in the garden, they're just cock-sure it's there."

"What?" cried Uncle Hugh, in a voice which made us all jump in our seats. Charley knew nothing of Philip's and my attempt at gardening. We had been too much ashamed to speak of it, and had no idea that there was anything taboo in the subject. Now he was too much scared to speak, but simply stared at Uncle Hugh, who recovered himself slowly.

"So they say there are buried treasures, do they?" he said, with a queer, constrained sort of smile. "Well! there is no limit to what people will say and believe. But I am glad you told me, Charley, boy—yes, very glad, I must see about it."

Ten days later the fence was taken away. Andrew, the gardener, and John, the coachman, had kept watch with loaded guns since the first alarm. A substantial summer house, which had been made in the neighboring village and brought over piecemeal,

was put up on the spot. Uncle Hugh, Andrew, and John did the whole of the work, and no one else was allowed even to look on. It was set so low that no one could possibly creep under it, and Uncle Hugh rubbed his hands when it was done.

"There!" he said, "I think that will puzzle them. I defy them to pull it down and they can hardly burn it without wakening some of us. I think we are safe at last."

Our arrival at the gate of Mount Graham brought my memories to an abrupt conclusion. Twilight had already fallen when we drove up the long avenue. The door stood hospitably open, and Uncle Hugh awaited me upon the steps.

"Welcome to Mount Graham, Elinor, my child," he said, as he led me into the parlor. "It was good of you to come. The place has few charms for a young thing like you, but I felt strangely lonely, and longed for the sight of a fair young face. Ah! the old man is failing, my dear."

I looked up, surprised at his tone. As the light fell upon my face Uncle Hugh started. Then he glanced at a portrait which since my earliest remembrance had hung over the high narrow mantel-piece.

"You have grown strangely like—" he said and paused abruptly. "I know what he meant. The portrait was that of my own great-uncle Elinor, whose sudden death, just one year after her marriage to Hugh Graham, had left him a broken and shattered man. I had often been told of the likeness, and it was with relief that I now saw that its recognition was pleasure rather than a grief to him."

The next day I renewed my acquaintance with the garden, and with Andrew, the old gardener. Apparently not a plant had been added and not one removed since my former visit. The box borders were as trim and glossy as ever. Darkspruce, jasmine, marigolds, all grew just where I remembered them. There was the row of hollyhocks, trim and straight against the garden wall, and there was the summer-house. I laughed out as I saw it.

"Andrew," I said, "the summer-house is standing yet, I see."

"Lord love you, yes, miss. That'll stand there until Master Hugh and me both turn our toes up. It was a queer thing to put it there; but Master Hugh wanted it, and that's enough for I."

"It is curious that this spot should never have been cultivated," said I. "It seems as if it should have been the prettiest spot in the garden."

Andrew scratched his head thoughtfully. "So it do seem, miss, and so it was once," he said. "The beautiful bed of lilies, all white and gold. That was many a long year ago, though, before ever you was born; before Miss Elinor, Master Hugh's wife, died. Beg pardon, miss! but I know her first as Miss Elinor and Miss Elinor, she always was to me, bless her sweet heart! It was her lily-bed. Morrin' and evnin' she used to come out and watch the lilies a-blowin' and a-swingin' on their green stalks. Said it minded her of Heaven, it did, with the white robes a-gleamin' and the golden hair a-ringin', and the praise goin' 'like fragrance forever and forever. Oh, she was a lovely young lady! After she died Master Hugh seemed to go just wild like—clean distraught. Said he'd no call to live now, and might as well get ready for death. So out he goes and buys his coffin. Andrew," says he, 'I want to be right here, among the lilies she loved,' says he, 'and to make sure, I'm going to make my bed now.' So then he began, and he dug and he dug and he dug, right smack in the middle of the lily bed. Oh, but they are beautiful lilies! He dug and he dug, and at last, after a while, he seemed to forget what he was diggin' for, and just kept on. He got so deep that—They do say, miss, some does, that the—the first you know, is down there, and I was mortal afraid he'd come to it. Day in and day out he dug and he dug. So at last he made bold to send word to his brother, Master Philip; young Master Philip's father he was. So he came, and brought a friend with him. I never had no opinion of that young fellow from the time I saw him moonin' round the edge of the hole, a-pokin' and a pryin'. And when he goes down into it, and comes up with a broad grin on his face, why, I makes up my mind about him then and there. So then he goes into the house post haste, and presents out comes Master Hugh in a towering rage, and Master Philip with him, tryin' to quiet him like, but Master Hugh wouldn't be quieted, not he. 'Fill up that hole, Andrew,' says he, 'or here! I'll do it myself.' And with that he whops down into the hole and digs away at the sides till he buries himself nigh up to the waist. So then he hauls him out, and I fills up the rest myself, and glad enough to do it, so long as he wasn't at the bottom of it. 'Mind, Andrew,' he says, when it's done, 'a spade is never to be put into that place while I'm above ground.' So then they goes into the house, and after a while Master Philip and his friend they drives away. So that's all I know, miss; and if you can make anything of it, why, I'm free to confess I can't. But, ah! they were beautiful lilies."

Andrew's story, instead of clearing up, had only deepened the mystery of the spot, and a weird and uncanny feeling crept over me as I turned away.

In my childhood I had never fully realized the peculiarities which had given Uncle Hugh his reputation of being a little cracked. Looking at him now with eyes purged from their childish films, I could readily understand how he might be so regarded. His horror of anything like innovation was certainly wonderful. All the water used in the house was brought from a well an eighth of a mile away, not even a pump in the kitchen being tolerated. The rooms were lighted solely by wax candles in an old-fashioned candleabra or heavy silver candlesticks, as was reckoned genteel in his youth. Of course it was useless to suggest such horrors as gas or kerosene; but at one time a bold effort was made to effect a compromise. A visitor with some regard for his eyesight brought with him as

a present to Uncle Hugh an old-fashioned astral lamp, in which sperm oil burned with a villainous odor. In spite of its antiquity, however, Uncle Hugh was made very uneasy about it. Politics caused him to tolerate it during his guest's stay, but not an instant longer. Hardly had the carriage borne him from the door than Uncle Hugh turned with a beaming face, crying: "Thank the Lord the villain has gone! Now for a return to the good old ways!" And straightway the lamp was banished to the lumber-room, the windows flung wide to purify the room, and the wax candles, with their glow-worm light, again reigned supreme.

The winter came soon and cold that year. It is hardly necessary to say that not a lump of coal was ever burned in Uncle Hugh's domains. It was a sight to see the great kitchen with its huge open fireplaces, where the monster logs were consumed, the crane spits, and bake-pans, and the queer oven on the side of the chimney-place. All over the house open wood fires crackled and snapped and roared; but however agreeable accessories, I found them wretched substitutes for the furnace heat of modern days. Colder and colder grew the weather, and vainly I strove to fancy myself thoroughly warmed by the ruddy glare.

"Uncle Hugh," I said at length, rendered desperate by despair, "why do you not burn coal?"

I knew that I ran the risk of offending Uncle Hugh, but I was by no means prepared for the scorn and indignation in his face as he dropped the Rambler and turned upon me.

"And why should I burn coal young lady?" he asked in a cool, incisive tone which was worse than an outburst of rage. Is not the fuel that my fathers used good enough for me? If the Lord had meant coal to be used by man, would he have shut it up in the bowels of the earth? He has put our enemy under our feet, and there let it stay. There let it stay!" he cried again, stamping his foot as if he were tramping upon the very old dragon himself, while a curious blaze of triumph shone in his eye.

I stared at him mutely for a moment, so much astonished to speak. Then the memory of the soft encircling warmth of the coal fires in my own home came over me once more, and urged me on.

"All modern ways are not barbarous," I persisted. "When the Lord was ready for men to use coal he brought it to light. If you would but try it once you would never go back to wood. It is cheaper, too."

"If it were cheap as dirt it should never be burned in my house!" cried Uncle Hugh, hotly. Then, mastering his emotion with an evident effort, he added, with his old-time courtesy: "I crave your pardon, Elinor. These subjects I would willingly avoid; but this I will say to you, last argument is false for cheaper it is not. The wood lies at my door, but how far must the coal be fetched?"

I had forgotten that point, and vexation at my slip, joined to the effects of the miserable cold, nearly got the better of my temper. I tried to turn it off with a joke. "You have only to dig up your buried treasures"—but I stopped short in dismay. For Uncle Hugh had started to his feet, his face white, his eyes glaring, his hair fairly bristling in spite of his tightly tied queue.

"What! what!" he stammered, scarcely able to speak. "Who has been telling you that? Who has been putting notions into your head? What do you mean, girl?"

"Dear Uncle Hugh!" I cried, terrified at his emotion. "Sit down! Do calm yourself. It was only a miserable joke. The country people used to say that Captain Kidd's treasure was buried here, you know, and it just happened to come into my mind. It was stupid of me to speak of it; but do, do forgive me."

Uncle Hugh sat down, weak and unnerved, trembling in every limb. Gradually the color returned to his face, and he regained the self-control which he had so strangely lost. That I lost myself in wondering conjectures need hardly be said. In vain I strove to pierce the mystery, to piece together my childish recollections and old Andrew's story. They were like two halves of different puzzles. Do what I would I could not fit them to each other. If one aided me to a plausible solution, the other came up and undid all my work, until at last I did what it would have been wiser to do at first, simply gave the whole thing up and tried to turn my attention to other matters.

I had enough to think of just at this time. I'll have not spoken before of the part which Philip played in my life. It was because it seemed that every one must know of it. It seems impossible for any one to think of me apart from Philip or of Philip apart from me, so completely have we been since our earliest childhood. When I went home; early in the spring, it was to make preparations for my marriage, which took place in August.

The old proverb in regard to the course of true love had not been verified in our courtship. Therefore, perhaps, it was but just that our married life should not move on altogether smoothly, as far as outward events were concerned. If there was an unlucky investment possible money was in it; if a bank failed or a company went to smash there were we in the midst of it. When we were reduced to living in a low-priced flat, and Philip was a bookkeeper for Grogram & Co., we thought the worst had come upon us. Then Grogram & Co. failed, and we sat down and looked at each other, not exactly in despair, for we still had each other, but certainly in dire perplexity.

"I wonder whether Uncle Hugh would let me dig up some of his buried treasures if I went on my knees to him?" I asked ruefully. Just then we heard the postman's signal, and Philip went to see what he had brought.

"Many a true word is spoken in jest," said Philip, as he came back reading a letter.

"What is it, Philip?" I asked, and looked up a little pale and shaken.

"Uncle Hugh is dead," he said, quietly.

"I was not much divided among three. You know he spent most of his money fighting the railroad company."

"You forgot the buried treasures," said Philip, with a curious twinkle in his eye.

"Philip!" I cried, indignantly, "I shouldn't think you'd go making stupid jokes now."

Philip became grave instantly. "It is not a joke, I assure you, my dear. The simple fact is that Mount Graham stands over a coal bed. My grandfather had always suspected the fact, and he once took up a mineralogist to make sure, but the effect on Uncle Hugh was so dreadful that he never dared to allude to it again. He told my father of it, however, making him promise to keep it secret as long as Uncle Hugh should live. My father, in his turn, told me, under the same restrictions. Uncle Hugh, as we all well know, was half insane, and any attempt to use the knowledge would infallibly have pushed him over the brink."

"But how can we use it now, Philip?" I asked, "when—" I paused, but Philip knew what I meant.

"It is very strange," he said. "But a few months ago I received a letter from Uncle Hugh, written apparently in anticipation of his death. It was a strange, rambling letter, inspired he said, by the spirit of his lost Elinor. He said that she had convinced him that the Lord had buried his treasures in the earth, to be disclosed in his own good time for the use of man. Therefore I was to consider myself at full liberty to do as I pleased with the old place."

"How strange!" I cried; remembering my last talk with Uncle Hugh. It is as if the words had been put into my mouth. Who knows whether they were or not?

I have never seen Mount Graham since. Philip and I talked of going up before operations were begun, but I decided that I would rather remember it as it was when I knew it first. And now there is no Mount Graham to see.

—H. H. HOLDRICH, in Harper's Bazar.

Is It for Jay Gould?

There is a certain rich man of New York, currently reported to be out of health, who is spending his summer in cheerful mortuary pursuits. The architects who design his houses and yachts for him are just now hard at work on the drawings for a tomb that is to be at once the biggest, most ornate, and most thoroughly burglar-proof last resting-place in this country. It will reach some hundred or more feet in the air, cover nearly half an acre of ground, require something like three years to complete the rich and beautiful sculptures with which it will be adorned, and the vault to contain the ashes of the dead pharaoh is a marvel of mechanical ingenuity.

In the first place, the ponderous slabs of granite forming the four sides of the receptacle for the coffin are nearly three feet in thickness. The upper one moves on springs as smoothly as a door, but only when certain intricate combinations have been carried out upon the lock, and any fumbling with the fastenings by a hand that does not know the proper springs to be pressed and pulled awakens certain engines of destruction which will make it decidedly uncomfortable for the fumbler. But the hardy body-snatcher would have to penetrate through many obstacles and difficulties before he reached the place where he could satisfactorily blow himself into smithereens.—Brooklyn Eagle.

The Widow of a Celebrated Man.

From the Buffalo Courier.

A Buffalonian writes from Orr's Island on the coast of Maine of a pleasant morning spent with Mrs. MacGahan, the widow of the famous correspondent whose accounts of the Bulgarian atrocities had a large share in the work of changing the map of Southeastern Europe. Mrs. MacGahan is a Russian, and at the time of her marriage could speak no English. As her husband could speak no Russian, they used to converse in French altogether. She now talks to her little boy of thirteen one week in Russian and the next in French. She is the American correspondent of two St. Petersburg newspapers, and is engaged upon a novel of Russian life she is writing in English. At Orr's Island she has been with the family of Nathan Dole, of Boston, the accomplished translator of Tolstoy's novels. It will be remembered that Buffalonians were somewhat taken aback last winter when Charles Williams the English correspondent, spoke of MacGahan as a fellow-countryman. He regarded the fact of the latter's birth in Ohio as a matter of no consequence.

The Iron Duke's Breeches.

One morning when the duke of Wellington was at breakfast, says Cassell's Magazine, he received a letter in an unknown and rather illegible handwriting. With a view to obtaining a clew to its contents he put on his eyeglasses and scrutinized the signature, which he read "C. J., London." "Oh!" said his grace, "the bishop of London, to be sure. What does the bishop want of me, I wonder?" Then he began at the beginning and read the note carefully through, an expression of bewilderment and perplexity gradually overspreading his face as he did so. The writer craved his grace's pardon for the intrusion and requested as a personal favor that the duke would kindly permit him to come and see his famous Waterloo breeches. "Why, the bishop must have gone mad!" exclaimed the duke, as he let his glasses fall. "See my Waterloo breeches! What in the world does the man want to see my breeches for? However, I'm sure I've no objection if he has a curiosity about them. A queer whim, though, for a bishop to take into his head."

Next morning the bishop of London, on seeing his pile of correspondence, found among it a letter bearing a ducal crest. He opened it and read as follows: "My Dear Lord: You are perfectly welcome, as far as I am concerned, to come and inspect the breeches I wore at Waterloo whenever you like. It's true I haven't a notion where they are, but I dare say my valet knows, and I will communicate with you more definitely in a day or two. Yours, very faithfully, Wellington." "The poor duke!" ejaculated the bishop of London, in a voice of the profoundest commiseration. "I always thought it was foolish of him to enter political life after his military career. He must be helplessly insane. What a dreadful thing for the country, to be sure!" So the worthy bishop, with many sighs, went into his study and wrote a kind letter to the duke of Wellington, remembering that persons who are mentally afflicted must be dealt with tenderly. He thanked his grace for his kindness, but assumed him as delicately as he could that he was not in the least anxious to inspect the historical relics in question, and begged that the duke would give himself no further trouble in the matter as far as he, the bishop of London, was concerned.

It was now the duke's turn to be astonished. "I can't have been dreaming," he said in his perplexity. "And yet the bishop's first letter was plain enough." Then he did what he ought to have done in the first instance—he called for his secretary, Col. B., and laid the whole matter before him. "I am afraid it's your grace who has made the mistake," said Col. B., an irrepressible smile flitting over his face as he examined the two letters. "The first letter is not from the bishop of London at all; nor does the writer say anything about the breeches you wore at Waterloo." "Not from the bishop!" exclaimed the duke. "Yes it is. The signature is as clear as can be—'C. J., London.' The initials stand for Charles James."

"It is from Mr. C. J. London, a scientific gentleman who is preparing an important work on forest trees," replied the secretary, "and what he wants to see is your grace's avenue, the Waterloo breeches, as they are called, leading up to your door at Stratfieldsaye. Shall I write and give him your permission?" And thus it fell out that both duke and bishop were ultimately convinced of each other's sanity.

The "Nigger" Who Woke up.

There were a lot of negroes on the boat as passengers, and one afternoon as the boat left Baton Rouge a little crowd of us on the promenade deck got to discussing the colored man. The colored man who was from Wisconsin, claimed that the reason the white man did not get along better with the negro was because he did not study his physiology. "You just set 'em all down as lazy, trifling, and dishonest," he said to the major, who was from South Carolina, "and the good suffer with the bad."

"Do you believe there is such a thing as an honest nigger in Louisiana?" asked the major.

"Of course I do."

"Could you pick one out in that crowd down there?"

"Certainly could."

"Well, go ahead for the cigars. Just pick your man, hand him a piece of money, and tell him to walk to the stern-post and back and return it."

"Say, major, ther's thirty negroes down there I'd trust with my wallet."

A Wedding Story.

From the London Telegraph.

The homily with which our marriage services closes lacks intrinsic cheerfulness and its peculiar charms, actual or suggestive, are seldom appreciated by the more youthful class of brides. Neither, despite its slight indecency, do all bridegrooms relish it with a perfect zest, although, in summarizing the obligations of matrimony, it puts the case for the husband a good deal more advantageously than for the wife. I remember an odd incident, illustrative of the objections entertained toward this tiresome exordium by men of the "Time is money" and "Self-help" ways of thinking. It took place at the second wedding of an honorable and gallant friend of mine, whose humor was abundant, but of the variety known as "dry." He was being married, let us say, at South Shields, a good many years ago, and, having been through the ceremony before, as a principal, was sharply on the lookout for the homily, which he regarded in the light of a vexatious superfluity. Accordingly when the curate—a young and somewhat nervous ecclesiastic—had completed the "buckling-to" part of the service, and was mildly bleating out the exhortation to "hear what Saint Paul saith," Captain P.—held up his hand, to the officiant's utter dismay, and interrupted him with the words, "I beg your pardon, sir; but are we legally married?" "Why, yes; certainly you are," was the hesitating reply. "Then, sir," rejoined the captain, "I'll trouble you to tell me what Saint Paul said. Saint Paul may have been a very good fellow, but he wasn't a South Shields man." This said, he gave his arm to his newly-made wife, and led her away calmly in the direction of the vestry.

The curate, it appears, entertained so high an opinion of the occult virtues of the homily, and of the beneficial effects they could not fail to exercise upon a young married couple, that he took my friend aside a few minutes before the wedding breakfast and timidly asked him whether he would permit him, the said curate, to impart St. Paul's views to him and Mrs. P.—orally on their return from the honeymoon trip? To this question, dictated by professional zeal which would have done credit to an Early Christian, my friend returned a polite, but evasive answer. When, however, husband and wife came back to their native town, at the conclusion of what the Germans so happily term "Die Flitterwochen," they were so obviously a happy pair, and the subsequent harmony of their married life proved so delightfully continuous, as far as their many friends and acquaintances knew, that the reverend enthusiast never found occasion to "place" his favorite homily, and wisely left at least two of his wedded parishioners to work out their conjugal felicity in their own way.

Spiders' Webs.

I read the statement in this magazine not long ago, about the spiders' webs that cover the fields and meadows on certain mornings in the Summer which was not entirely exact. It is not quite true in the sense in which it was uttered, that these spiders' webs are more abundant on some mornings than on others, and that they preface fair weather. Now the truth is, that during the latter part of Summer these webs are about as abundant at one time as another; but they are much more noticeable on some mornings than on others; a heavy dew brings them to view. They are especially conspicuous after a morning of fog, such as often follows our deeper valleys for a few hours when Fall approaches. They then look like little napkins spread all over the meadows. I saw fields last Summer, in August, when one could step from one of these dew-napkins to another for a long distance. They are little nets that catch the fog. Every thread is strung with innumerable fine drops, like tiny beads. After an hour of sunshine, the webs apparently are gone.

Most country people, I find, think they are due to nothing but the moisture; others seem to think that the spiders take them in as morning advances. But they are still there, stretched above the grass at noon and at sunset, as abundant as they are at sunrise; and are then more serviceable to the spiders because visible. The flies and insects would avoid them in the morning, but at midday they do not detect them as readily. If these webs have any significance as signs of the coming weather, this may be the explanation: A heavy dew occurs under a clear, cool sky, and the night preceding a day of rain is usually a dewless night. Much dew, then, means fair weather and a copious flow of daisies, the spiders' webs. It is the dew that is significant, and not the webs.—Joe, Burroughs, in St. Nicholas.

This Happened at Santucket.

Harper's Magazine.

Last fall a man was arrested for petty larceny and sentenced by the judge to three months in jail. A few days after the trial, the judge, accompanied by the sheriff, was on his way to the Boston boat, when they passed a man sawing wood.

The sawyer stopped his work, touched his hat, and said: "Good morning, judge."

The judge looked at him a moment, passed on a short distance, and then turned to glance backward with the question: "Why, sheriff, isn't that the man I sentenced to three months in jail?"

"Yes," replied the sheriff, hesitatingly; "yes, that's the man; but you—you—see, judge, we—haven't any one in jail now, and we thought it a needless expense to hire some one to keep the jail for three months just for this one man, so I gave him the key, and told him if he'd sleep there three nights it would be all right."