

Only a Little Child.

Only a little child whom few could know,
And yet I wonder why my warm tears
flow?

Only a little soul that's taken flight,
Only a little coffin—small and white.

Amid the roses sweet as innocence,
Amid the roses sweet as heav'n's incense.

Two wond'ring limpid eyes drooping in
death,
Whilst angels hover near with bated
breath.

Two tiny hands upon a tiny breast,
Two restless pattering feet fore'er at
rest!

Oh! little snowy breast so pure, so fair!
Oh, little loving heart so still in there!

Only a little babe—a little child,
Yet when he died the gentle Shepherd
smiled.

A little lamb to join the flock above,
Another little lamb for Him to love.

Only a little babe—a little child,
Yet when he died the Shepherd up there
smiled.

A SINGULAR SITUATION

"Lost, by thunder!" exclaimed Godfrey Barrett.

And as though in corroboration of his dismayed remark, there resounded from the lowering heavens a crackling, long rumbling, crisp as the cannonade from a battery of artillery. The man stood still on the country road and looked around him, trying to decide in what direction lay the town from which he had started out that morning on a trip of exploration.

"Mighty tropical scene for Illinois," he muttered. "One can't see a house for vegetation. Hallo! Those are red gables showing through the trees!" He turned off briskly in the direction of the house. He would ask shelter until the coming storm was over, and then make his way back to the village.

The day had been hot. Even now sultriness hung like a palpable thing over the land. To the south and east the sky was deeply purple. Through its serrated cloud banks tridents of fire pitchforked their glittering way.

The cottonwoods at either side of the path up which the stranger walked were moving restlessly. The pale inner lining of their green leaves made an uncertain shimmer in the premature dusk that was settling down upon all things. Now and then a bird chirped—a tiny, fluting note of prescient agitation.

The house upon which Barrett came was not large, but it was built in colonial style, and conveyed the impression of comfort. The door, standing wide open, revealed a square hall, with rugs on the polished floor and dwarf bookcases let in under the stairway.



"Lost, by thunder!"

"Oh!" cried a soft, excited voice. "It is you! You have come—at last!" Godfrey Barrett's hand dropped from the bell. A lady appeared at the end of the hall. She seemed shy, but rejoiced. And, as she came out of the

semi-gloom in the light from the doorway, her appearance gave Godfrey something of a shock. There was something uncanny about her. And yet, she was unusually handsome.

"Why did you not write me to expect you?" she asked. A spasm of pain contorted her features, and she laid her hand clutchingly upon her bosom. "Come—you are welcome—dear!" She held out her arms in expectant greeting.

It was the fact that her face, hair, attire, all were white, Barrett decided, that gave her such a ghostly look. And yet the face was youthful, despite its coronet of thick, soft hair. But there was something in the eyes that he had never seen before. It was an expression, vague, wistful, longing, that at once attracted and repelled him. Most of all, it aroused in him an inexplicable sense of compassion.

He went forward and took her hands. He had an idea that this was the proper thing to do, though he could not have told why.

"If you will be good enough to let me stay here until the storm is over," he began, and a rushing torrent of rain confirmed his request.

"Ah, longer than that," she said. She smiled—a slow, sweet smile, inexpressibly sad. "Now that you have come at last you must stay until it's time to go away on your next voyage."

"But, perhaps," looking at him with nazel eyes grown suddenly brilliant with hope, "perhaps you will not have to go on another voyage. Perhaps you can remain at home—now!"

Barrett was at a loss for a reply. She took him for someone else—some one dearly loved at that. And she looked so fragile. If he were suddenly to undeceive her as to his identity would the shock seriously affect her? He had noticed the instantaneous agony the sight of him had caused her.

"I think—maybe—" he began to stammer. Under the pretense of putting away his hat he released himself. He had jerked it under his arm when he went forward to take her hands. Now as he turned toward the hall rack he saw in its mirror that another woman was coming swiftly across the drawing room behind him—a younger woman.

He flung around quickly. "I beg your pardon for this intrusion," he said.

She looked apprehensively at the woman in white, then up at the straight, athletic young stranger, with the fine broad-based brow and frank, fascinating blue eyes. And he, in turn, was conscious of profound relief at meeting her gaze. There was nothing bordering on the supernatural in this fair girl. Her house dress of ping lawn was daintily coquettish. And her eyes, the clear, unembarrassed eyes of a sunny-souled maiden, gave assurance of sanity and composure.

"You were overtaken by the storm, I presume. Will you not come into the library and wait until it is over?" She closed the door, for the rain was beating in at the threshold, then indicated the room at the left. "Aunt Alice," she said coaxingly to the woman in white, "will you not come to your own room and rest? You look very tired. Come, darling!"

She spoke as she might have spoken to a little child—entreatingly and with affection. But the other pushed her away with a sudden, nervous gesture.

"I don't know what you can be thinking of, Bertha," she said impatiently. "Why should I go away—now? Don't you see that Henry has come back?"

She moved closer to Barrett and put her thin hand on his arm with an air of possession.

"O merciful heaven!" murmured the younger woman. She clasped her slim pretty hands with a swift gesture of despair. Barrett met her appealing glance and nodded. She scanned his features slowly from brow to chin with keen, scrutinizing gaze. Then she, too, nodded comprehendingly.

"I see the resemblance. It is astonishing," she said. Then, with the same beguiling gentleness she turned imploringly to the woman at Barrett's side. "Dear," she pleaded, "come with Bertha. Come with me."

"You lied to me!" cried her aunt sharply. You told me—all of you—that Henry was dead. You said he was drowned at sea. But he is here. He has come back. I always knew he would come back. Dearest," she turned to Godfrey, her clinging fingers tightening their hold upon his arm, "you will not go away—ever—again?"

He was beginning to understand the singular situation in which he found himself. He knew now what that distant look in her eyes meant. He patted her hand tenderly. He spoke in a lowered voice. "I am very tired," he said. "I have walked far. You will go and try to rest a little. You will let me rest also. And then—perhaps—we will talk—later."

"Oh, I am not in the least tired," she cried, joyously. "I am only happy, happy. And was sometimes afraid I was never going to be happy again. But, of course, if you have traveled



"You have not kissed me, Henry."

far, I will leave you alone until you send for me." She moved away, then turned back. "You have not kissed me, Henry," she said reproachfully.

He looked hastily at the girl. Her sweet eyes were dim with tears. She hurriedly bent her head. He stooped and touched his lips to the pallid cheek of the elder woman. She flushed at the touch. She smiled—gladly, exultantly, and without further protestation went away.

When the girl returned she closed the door behind her. She struck a match and lighted the fire laid ready in the grate for just such a rainy afternoon as this and pointed to a chair.

"I have looked again," she said, "at the picture in the room of my poor aunt. You are very like her lover of many years ago. He was a naval officer and went away on his last voyage before his marriage. When she heard that his ship, with all hands on board, had been lost, her mind gave way. And when Henry Allison, who had been supposed dead, returned—a rescued survivor—she did not recognize him. Why—what is it?"

Godfrey had risen excitedly to his feet.

"Henry Allison was my mother's brother. That accounts for my resemblance. He has been dead many years."

"Yes, I know. You have noticed how frail Aunt Alice is? Your coming has made her so content. What was that?" She had risen. "Quick, Rosa!" to the maid, who had burst into the room, "Aunt Alice has fainted, you say. Send Tom for the doctor. These fainting fits are serious with her."

She ran from the room and up the stairs. Barrett hesitated and followed her. A sobbing cry came to him as he reached the landing. He needed no explanation of its cause when he stood in the doorway. The woman

seated in the window, an old photograph clasped in her stiffening fingers, would never more look and long and listen for the step and the voice that might not come.

But Godfrey Barrett returned to the scene of his strange adventure again and yet again. Nor could Bertha Craig long withstand the ardor of his wooing.

"I think I began to care for you," she admitted, "when I saw how kind you were to poor Aunt Alice."

"But I," he hesitated with lover's bravado, "cared for you before I really saw you. I think I fell in love with the little anxious face I saw reflected in the mirror."—Alice Skinner in Boston Globe.

STORY OF A 'POSSUM.

Jones Bought One for the Purpose of Fattening Him.

"Now," said Jones, when he had paid the man a dollar and a quarter for the lean, hungry-looking opossum: "We'll take him to the back yard, and put him in that old mockin'-bird cage, for the present; and I bet you that in less'n two weeks we'll have him as fat as a butter ball! And then we'll slay him, and have him cooked as brown as a berry, with 'aters all 'round him and gravy that'll be as mouth-waterin' as a canemill drippin' juice. O, it'll be a feast to make you smack your mouth the rest o' your life!"

Tse 'possum said never a word. Like B'r'er Rabbit, "he lay low," and suffered himself to be empaled in the bird cage, and in no way resented the jibes and laughter of the children, as they crowded round his prison-house. He was what might be called a wise 'possum, who well knew that the whirligig of time brings its revenges, and that all things, including bill collectors, come to him who waits.

So he waited.

That night Jones retired at his usual hour, to dream of fat 'possums, cooked to a turn; and so pleasant was his dream that, when the hired boy came to wake him, he threw the alarm clock at the boy's head.

"Ef you please, suh," said the boy, from a safe distance, "dat 'possum"—

The magic name brought Jones to his feet. "Well, what about the 'possum?" he bawled.

Not long was he in ignorance. The monster had gnawed his way to freedom from the bird cage, and, finding seven game chickens and nine registered pigeons in his way, he forthwith dispatched them, and having breakfasted to his satisfaction, he departed for his old home, in a swamp about five miles to the southward.

Jones looked from the boy to the bird-cage; then his eyes wandered over the field of the slain. Then he smashed the cage into a thousand pieces, and when his wife, alarmed by screams in the back yard, rushed to the scene, she discovered Jones beating the boy, who was bellowing for his life!

And when it was suggested that he had best devote his energies to catching the 'possum—

"D—n the 'possum!" said Jones.—Atlanta Constitution.

Solve the Tramp Problem.

Out in Colby a remedy for the tramp nuisance has been found. The city council had 1,000 meal tickets printed and distributed them among the women. When a tramp knocks at a kitchen door and asks for a "handout" he gets one of these tickets, which is good for a meal when signed by the city marshal. When the marshal gets hold of the tramp he compels him to work a couple of hours in payment for the meal. Tramps are scarce in Colby.

Independence for Negroes.

An Afro-American stock company, composed of negroes, has been organized in San Bernardino, southern California. It proposes to bring to that part of the state all the Southern negroes who have the will and the money to make themselves independent as ranchers and orange growers.