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Yesterday-Today.

They sat together on the sand
That for the gentle flowing river makes a shore,
And watched the sun-set grand;
And listened to the water flowing o'er
The passive, pebble-studded strand.
The sun sank soon behind the height.
The daylight changed to even, ev'ning gathered
into gloaming;
Far across the bottoms shone a light
And cattle came beyond the sandy hills from
roaming;
The sound unheard; unseen the sight.
The old bridge with its broken pier
Stands as it stood above the slowly-gliding river:
The flying night-birds scream as near
As on that May-night with its sweet 'forever.'
All but the plighted 'two' are here.

MARIUS.

Sketch.

The old man led the trembling old blind horse out of the barn and pulled him gently along the path down through the bleak pasture. When the horse stumbled in the rut where the fall rains had washed away the loose clay, or halted suddenly at the rustle of corn husks that had blown in among the dry iron weeds along the path, the old man spoke reassuringly, "Come, Charlie; come now; whoa, Charlie, whoa."

Down at the foot of the path near the steep banks of the creek was a clump of young oak shoots. Just above this the old man stopped the horse, unbuckled the halter and held the stringy white mane while he drew from his pocket an old razor. He opened it and patted the lean white shoulders for a moment, his eyes turned off across the creek to the cornfield and prairie to the west. He waited quietly for so long a time that old Charlie turned his head to nose the arm that leaned against him.

Then the old man roused himself, closed his eyes, groped for the artery on old Charlie's neck, felt the feeble pulse and gave a quick slash. He jerked away, but not before he felt a touch of warm blood. He threw the razor up into the weeds and listened. He could hear stumbling behind him and he glanced back to see if the horse were following him. No, he was staggering in among the oak brush this way and that but always down nearer the creek bank. "Whoa, Charlie, whoa!" the old man called nervously and Charlie turned his blind eyes toward the voice.

He called again but the horse swayed and fell

over the bank down into the deep water where the first thin ice had formed.

When the old man came back to the house, his wife was getting supper. She looked at him keenly as he came in but said nothing. He sat down by the stove and looked vacantly across the eggs that sputtered over the fire.

"If he hadn't quit eating," he burst out at last, "I could've kept him. I always said an old horse had earned his keep."

His wife answered him with the best excuse she knew.

"I guess going blind was what made him quit eating. He would've starved. You had to."

In the winter when he traded his farm for a house and lot in town he told the agent that there were a good many things on a farm that an old man could not do.

He and his wife planned out all their town life and were very happy. They built a store on the north side of the lot for groceries and notions, put three hundred dollars in the bank and settled down to the novelty of having nothing living they could call their own except each other.

The little store had a lively trade for a few years till the boom was over. The bank account crept slowly to five hundred and was well up toward six hundred when the bank failed. After the failure they knew the store must be closed. So they carried the groceries into the house and put up a rent sign in the store window. But no renter came. The groceries were used up little by little. Once or twice there was some hope of a dividend from the bank. When winter came on there was but one thing to do.

The old man hunted up what seemed to him the least forbidding sign that advertised a real estate and loan agent. He felt his face flush when he sat down by the young lawyer's desk and explained that he wanted to mortgage his place for five hundred dollars. The young lawyer was pleasant. He stated the terms on which "the company" let out money. He asked a great many questions and walked with the old man to the door, after a promise to look the matter up. He thought there would not be any trouble in getting the money.

The old man and his wife sat up late that night. With five hundred dollars they could pay the year's taxes and start the grocery again. Five years was a short time to make five hundred dollars, but they could sell the place if the worst came to the worst. They figured over all the letter paper in the house, got into a mild dispute about the rules for interest