# AN UNWILLING NEIGHBOR.

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON.

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I was about 25 years old when I began life as the owner of a vineyard in western Virginia. I bought a large tract of land, the greater part of which lay upon the sloping side of one of the foothills of the Blue Ridge, the exposure being that most favorable to the growth of the vine. I am an enthusiastic lover of the country and of country life, and believed that I should derive more pleasure as well as profit from the culture of my far-stretching vineyard than I would from ordinary operations.

I built myself a good house of moderate size upon a little plateau on the other part of my estate. Sitting in my front porch, smoking my pipe after the labors of the day, I could look down over my vineyard into a beautiful valley, with here and there a little curling smoke arising from some of the few dwellings which were scattered about among the groves and spreading fields, and above this beauty I could imagine all my hillside clothed in green and purple.

My family consisted of myself alone. It is true that I expected some day that there would be others in my house besides myself, but I was not ready for that yet.

During the summer I found it very pleasant to live by myself. It was a novelty, and I could arrange and manage everything in my own fashion, which was a pleasure I had not enjoyed when I lived in my father's house; but when winter came I found it very lonely. Even my servants lived in a cabin at some little distance, and there were many dark and stormy evenings when the company even of a bore would have been welcome to me. Sometimes I walked over to the town and visited my friends there, but this was not feasible on stormy nights, and the winter seemed to me a very long one.

But spring came, outdoor operations began, and for a few weeks I felt again that I was all-sufficient for my own pleasure and comfort. Then came a change. One of those seasons of bad and stormy weather which so frequently follow an early spring settled down upon my spirits and my hillside. It rained, it was cold, fierce winds blew, and I became more anxious for somebody to talk to than I had been at any time during the winter.

One night, when a very bad storm was raging, I went to bed early, and as I lay awake I revolved in my mind the scheme of which I had frequently thought before. I would build a neat little house on my grounds, not very far away from my house, but not too near, and I would ask Jack Brandinger to come there and live. Jack was a friend of mine, who was reading law in the town, and it seemed to me that it would be much more pleasant and even more profitable to read law on a pretty hillside overlooking a charming valley, with woods and mountains behind and above him, where he could ramble to his heart's content.

I had thought of asking Jack to come and live with me, but this idea I soon dismissed. I am a very particular person, and Jack is not; he leaves his pipes about in all sorts of places—sometimes when they are still lighted. When he came to see me he was quite as likely to put his hat over the inkstand as to put it anywhere else. But if Jack lived at a little distance, and we could go backwards and forwards to see each other whenever we pleased, that would be quite another thing. He could do as he pleased in his own house, and I could do as I pleased in mine, and we might have many pleasant evenings together. This was a cheering idea, and I was planning how we might arrange with the negro woman who managed my household affairs to attend also to those of Jack, when I fell asleep.

I did not sleep long before I was awakened by the increased violence of the storm. My house shook with the fury of the wind; the rain seemed to be pouring on its roof and northern side as if there were a waterfall above us, and every now and then I could hear a shower of hailstones rattling against the shutters. My bedroom was one of the rooms on the lower floor, and even there I could hear the pounding of the deluge and the hailstones upon the roof.

All this was very doleful, and had a tendency to depress the spirits of a waking man, alone in a good-sized house; but I shook off this depression. It was not agreeable to be up here by myself in such a terrible storm, but there was nothing to be afraid of, as my house was new and very strongly built, being constructed of logs, weatherboarded outside and sealed within. It would require a hurricane to blow off the roof, and I believed my shutters to be hail-proof; so, as there was no reason to stay awake, I turned over and went to sleep.

I do not know how long it was before I was awakened again, this time not by the noise of the storm, but by a curious movement of my bedstead. I had once felt the slight shock of an earthquake, and it seemed to me that this must be something of the kind; certainly my bed moved under me. I sat up; the room was pitchy dark. In a moment I felt another movement, but this time it did not seem to resemble an earthquake shock; such motion, I think, is generally in horizontal directions, while what I felt was more like the slower movement of a ship upon the water. The storm was at its height, the wind raged and roared, and the rain seemed to be pouring down as heavily as ever.

I was about to get up and light the lamp, for even the faintest candle flame would be some sort of company at such a gruesome moment, when my bedstead gave another movement, more shiplike than before. It actually lurched forward as if it were de-

THE MOTION OF THE BED STILL CONTINUED.

scending into the trough of the sea, but, unlike a ship, it did not rise again, but remained in such a slanting position that I began to slide down toward the foot. I believe that if it had not been a bedstead provided with a footboard, I should have slipped out upon the floor.

I did not jump out of bed; I did not do anything; I tried to think, to understand the situation, to find out whether I was asleep or awake, when I became aware of noises in the room and all over the house, which even through the din of the storm made themselves noticed by their peculiarity. Tables, chairs, everything in the room seemed to be grating and grinding on the floor, and in a moment there was a crash. I knew what that was; it was my lamp, which had slipped off the table. Any doubt on that point would have been dispelled by the smell of kerosene which filled the air of the room.

The motion of the bed, which I now believe must have been the motion of the whole house, still continued; but the grating noises in the room gradually ceased, from which I inferred that the furniture had brought up against the front wall of the room.

Now, it was impossible for me to get up and strike a light, for to do so with kerosene oil all over the floor and its vapor diffused through the room would probably result in setting the house on fire, so I must stay in darkness and wait. I do not think I was very much frightened—I was so astonished that there was no room in my mind for fear. In fact, all my mental energies were occupied in trying to find out what had happened. It required, however, only a few more minutes of reflection and a few more minutes of the grating, bumping, trembling of my house to enable me to make up my mind what had happened; my house was sliding down hill!

The wind must have blown the building from its foundations, and, upon the slippery surface of the hillside, probably lashed into liquid mud by the pouring rain, it was making its way down towards the valley! In a flash my mind's eye ran over the whole surface of the country beneath me as far as I knew it. I was almost positive that there was no precipice, no terrible chasm into which my house might fall. There was nothing but sloping hillside, and beneath that wide stretch of fields.

Now there was a new and sudden noise of heavy objects falling upon the roof, and I knew what that meant; my chimney had been wrenched from its foundations and the upper part of it had now toppled over. I could hear, through the storm, the bricks banging and sliding upon the slanting roof. Continuous sounds of cracking and snapping came to me through the closed front windows, and these were caused, I supposed, by the destruction of the stakes of my vines as the heavy house moved over them.

Of course, when I thoroughly understood the state of the case, my first impulse was to spring out of bed, and, as quickly as possible, to get out of that thumping and sliding house; but I restrained myself. The floor might be covered with broken glass, I might not be able to find my clothes in that darkness and in the jumble of furniture at the end of the room, and even if I could dress myself, it would be folly to jump out in the midst of that raging storm into a probable mass of wreckage which I could not see; it would be far better to remain dry and warm under my roof. There was no reason whatever to suppose that the house could go to pieces or that it would turn over; it must stop some time or other, and, until it did so, I would be safer in my bed than anywhere else. Therefore in my bed I staid.

Sitting upright, with my feet pressed against the footboard, I listened and felt; the noises of the storm and the cracking and snapping and grinding before me and under me still continued, although I sometimes thought that the wind was moderating a little, and that the strange motion was becoming more regular. I believed the house was moving faster than when it first began its strange career, but that it was sliding over a smooth surface. Now I noticed a succession of loud cracks and snaps at the front of the house, and, from the character of the sounds, I concluded that my little front porch, which had been acting as a cutwater at the bow of my ship-like house, had yielded at last to the rough contact with the ground, and would probably soon be torn away. This did not disturb me, for the house must still be firm.

It was not long before I perceived that the slanting of my bed was becoming less and less and less, and also I was quite sure that the house was moving more slowly. Then the crackings and snappings before my front wall ceased altogether. The bed resumed its ordinary horizontal position, and, although I did not know at what exact moment the house ceased sliding and came to a standstill, I was sure that it had done so. It was resting at last upon a level surface. The room was still perfectly dark and the storm continued. There was no use for me to get up until daylight came—so I lay back upon the pillow and tried to imagine upon what level portion of my farm I had stranded. While doing this I fell asleep.

When I awoke a little light was stealing into my room through the blinds of my shutters. I quickly slipped out of bed, opened a window, looked out. Day was just breaking, the rain and wind had ceased and I could discern objects, but it seemed as if I needed some light in my brain to enable me to comprehend what I saw. My eyes fell upon nothing familiar.

I did not stop to investigate, however, from my window I found my clothes huddled together with the furniture at the front end of the room, and as soon as I was dressed I went into the hall, and then to my front door. I quickly jerked this open and was about to step outside, when suddenly I stopped. I was positive that my front porch had been destroyed, but there I saw a porch, a little lower than mine and a great deal wider, and on the other side of it, not more than eight feet from me, was a face—the face of a young girl! As I stood staring in blank amazement at the house which presented itself at my front door, the face at the window disappeared and I was left to contemplate the scene by myself. I ran to my back door and threw it open. There I saw stretching up the fields and far up the hillside the wide path which my house had made as it came down from its elevated position to the valley beneath, where it had ended its onward career by slopping up against another house. As I looked off the back porch I saw that the ground still continued to slope, so that if my house had not found in its path another building it would probably have proceeded somewhat farther on its course. It was lighter, and I saw bushes and fences and little outbuildings—in a back yard.

Almost breathless with amazement and consternation I ran again to the front door; when I reached it I found a young woman standing on the porch of the house before me. I was about to say something—I know not what—when she put her finger on her lips and stepped forward.

"Please don't speak loudly," she said. "I am afraid it will frighten mother; she is asleep yet. I suppose you and your house have been sliding down hill?"

"That is what has happened," said I, "but I cannot understand it; it seems to me the most amazing thing that ever took place on the face of the earth."

"It is very queer," said she, "but hurricanes do blow away houses, and that must have been a hurricane we had last night, for the wind was strong enough to loosen any house. I have often wondered if that house would ever slide downhill."

"My house?"

"Yes," she said. "Soon after it was built, I began to think what a nice, clean sweep it could make from the place where it seemed to be stuck to the side of the mountain, right down here into the valley."

I could not talk with a girl like this; at least I could not meet her on her own conversational grounds. I was so agitated myself that it seemed unnatural that any one to whom I should speak should not also be agitated.

"Who are you?" I asked rather bruesquely; "at least, to whom does this house belong?"

"This is my mother's house," said she. "My mother is Mrs. Carson. We happen just now to be living here by ourselves, so I cannot call on any man to help you do anything. My brother has always lived with us, but last week he went away."

"You don't seem to be a bit astonished at what has happened," said I.

She was rather a pretty girl, of a cheerful disposition, I should say, for several times she had smiled as she spoke.

"Oh, I am astonished," she answered; "or at least I was, but I have had time enough to get over some of it. It was at least an hour ago when I was awakened by hearing something crack in the yard. I went to a window and looked out, and could just barely see that something like a big building had grown up during the night. Then I watched it, and watched it, until I made out of it a whole house, and after that it was not long before I guessed what had happened. It seemed a simpler thing to me, you know, than it did to you, because I had often thought about it, and probably you never had."

"You are right there," said I earnestly. "It would have been impossible for me to imagine such a thing."

"At first I thought there was nobody in the house," said she, "but when I heard some one moving about, I came down to tell whoever had arrived not to make a noise. I see," she added, with another of her smiles, "that you think I am a very strange person not to be more flurried by what has happened, but really, I cannot think of anything else just now except what mother will say and do when she comes down and finds you and your house here at the back door. I am very sure she will not like it."

"Like it!" I exclaimed. "Who on earth could like it?"

"Please speak more gently," she said. "Mother is always a little irritable when her night's rest has been broken, and I would not like to have her wakened up suddenly now; but really, Mr. Warren, I haven't the least idea in the world how she will take this thing. I must go in and be with her when she wakes, so that I can explain just what has happened."

"One moment," I said. "You know my name?"

"Of course I know your name," she answered. "Could that house be up there on the hillside for more than a year without me knowing who lived in it?" With this, she went indoors.

I could not help smiling when I thought of the young lady regretting that there was no man in the house who might help me do something. What could anybody do in a case like this? I turned and went into the house. I entered the various rooms on the lower floor, and saw no signs of any particular damage, except that everything movable in each room was jumbled together against the front wall, but when I looked out of the back door, I found that the porch there was a good deal wrecked, which I had not noticed before.

I went upstairs and found everything pretty much as it was below. Nothing seemed to have been injured except the chimney and the porches. I thanked my stars that I had used hard wood instead of mortar for the ceilings of my rooms.

I was about to go into my bedroom, when I heard a woman scream, and of course I hurried to the front. There on the back porch of her house stood Mrs. Carson. She was a woman of middle age, and, as I glanced at her, I saw where her daughter got her good looks, put the placidity and cheerfulness of the younger face was entirely wanting in the mother. Her eyes sparkled, her cheeks were red, her mouth

IT WAS VERY PLEASANT TO HELP THEM GET THEIR GARDEN IN ORDER.

was partly opened, and it seemed to me that I could almost see that her breath was hot.

"Is that your house?" she cried, the moment her eyes fell upon me; "and what is it doing here?"

I did not immediately answer. I looked at the angry woman, and behind her I saw, through the open door, the daughter, crossing the hallway; it was plain that she had decided to let me have it out with her mother without interference. As briefly and as clearly as I could, I explained what had happened.

"What is all that to me?" she screamed. "It doesn't matter to me how your house got there. There have been storms ever since the beginning of the world, and I never heard of any of them taking a house into a person's back yard. You ought not to have built your house where any such thing could happen; but all this is nothing to me. I don't understand now how your house did get there, and I don't want to understand it. All I want is for you to take it away."

"I will do that, madam, just as soon as I can. You may be very sure I will do that, but—"

"Can you do it now?" she asked. "Can you do it today? I don't want a minute lost. I have not been outside to see what damage has been done, but the first thing to do is to take your house away."

"I am going to the town now, madam, to summon assistance."

Mrs. Carson made no answer, but she turned and walked to the end of her porch. There she suddenly gave a scream, which quickly brought her daughter from the house. "Kitty! Kitty!" cried her mother; "do you know what he has done? He has gone right over my round flower garden; his house is sitting on it this minute!"

"But he could not help it, mother," said Kitty.

"Help it!" exclaimed Mrs. Carson. "I don't want him to help it; what I want—" Suddenly she stopped. Her eyes flashed, brighter, and her mouth opened wider. She seemed to have lost the power of speech, but quickly it came back to her. "Little Samuel!" she screamed. "Kitty, do you know I believe he has scratched up little Samuel!"

I looked at her stupified without knowing what she was talking about. "Little Samuel" again screamed Mrs. Carson, and she ran about, wildly endeavoring to get off her porch, but my house had demolished her steps and it blocked up the opening.

"The side door, mother!" said Miss Kitty, and then, as the older woman disappeared into the house with a stifled exclamation, her daughter said to me: "It is my little brother she is thinking about. He died some years ago and was buried in a small graveyard back of our garden. She thinks your house has gone over it and has scratched him up." Miss Carson now followed her mother, and I jumped over the railings of the porch and ran after them.

As we hurried along by my house and into their garden, which now seemed to be unevenly divided into two parts, scream after scream came from Mrs. Carson, as she noticed the absence of sheds, fences, or vegetable beds, which had found themselves in the course of my all-destroying dwelling. Once she turned her head towards me, her face pallid. "If you have scratched up little Samuel!" she screamed, panting, but she had not breath enough to finish the sentence, and continued onward with clenched fists.

But little Samuel was not scratched up. My house had not passed within 100 feet of his resting place. Then we turned and went back to the house, or rather to the houses.

It was now well on in the morning and some of the neighbors had become aware of the strange disaster which had happened to me, although if they had heard the news from Mrs. Carson, they might have supposed that it was a disaster which had happened only to her. As they gazed at the two houses so closely jammed together all of them wondered, some of them even laughed, but not one of them offered a suggestion which afforded satisfaction to Mrs. Carson or myself. The general opinion was that my house was there, it would have to stay there, for there were not enough horses in the state to pull it back up the mountainside. To be sure it might possibly be moved off sidewise, but whether it was moved one way or the other a lot of Mrs. Carson's trees would have to be cut down to let it pass.

"Which shall never happen!" cried that good lady. "If nothing else can be done it must be taken apart and hauled off in carts, but no matter how it is managed it must be moved, and that immediately."

Miss Carson now prevailed upon her mother to go into the house, and I stayed and talked to the men and few women who had gathered outside.

When they had said all they had to say, and seen all there was to see, these people went home to their breakfasts. I entered my house, not by the front door, for to do that I would have been obliged to trespass upon Mrs. Carson's back porch. I got my hat and was about to start for the town, when I heard my name called. Turning into the hall, I saw Miss Carson, who was standing at my front door.

"Mr. Warren," said she, "you haven't any way of getting breakfast, have you?"

"Oh, no," said I. "My servants are up there in their cabin, and I suppose they are too much scared to come down, but I am going to town to see what can be done about my house and will get my breakfast there."

"It's a long way to go without anything to eat," she said, "and we can give you some breakfast; but I want to ask you something. I am in a good deal of perplexity; our two servants are out at the front of the house, but they positively refuse to come in. They are afraid that your house may begin sliding away and crush them all, so I shall have to get breakfast; but what bothers me is trying to find our well. I have been outside and can see no signs of it."

"Where was your well?" I gasped.

"It ought to be somewhere near the back of your house," she said. "May I go through your hall and look out?"

"Of course you may," I cried, and I preceded her to my back door.

"Now, it seems to me," she said, after surveying the scene of desolation immediately before, and looking from side to side, towards objects which had remained untouched, "that your house has passed directly over our well, and must have carried away the little shed and the pump and everything above ground. I should not wonder a bit," she continued slowly, "if it is under your porch."

I jumped to the ground, for the steps were shattered, and began to search for the well, and it was not long before I discovered its round dark opening, which was, as Miss Carson had imagined, under one end of my porch.

"What can we do?" she asked. "We can't have breakfast or get along at all without water." It was a terribly depressing thing to me to think that I, or rather my house, had given these people so much trouble, but I speedily assured Miss Carson that if she could find a bucket and a rope, which I could lower into the well, I could provide her with water.

She went into her house to see what she could find, and I tore away the broken planks of the porch, so that I could get to the well, and then, when she came with a tin pail and a clothesline, I went to work with great ardor to haul up water and to carry it to her back door.

"I don't want mother to find out what has happened to the well," she said, "for she has enough on her mind already."

Mrs. Carson was a woman with some good points in her character. After time she called to me, herself, and told me to come in to breakfast, but during the meal she talked very earnestly to me about the amazing trespass I had committed, and about the means which should be taken to repair the damages my house had done to her property. I was as optimistic as I could be, and the young lady spoke very cheerfully and hopefully about the affair, so that we were beginning to get along somewhat pleasantly when suddenly Mrs. Carson sprang to her feet. "Heavens and earth," she cried, "this house is moving."

She was not mistaken. I had felt beneath my feet a sudden sharp shock—not severe, but unmistakably. I remembered that both houses stood upon slightly sloping ground, my blood turned cold, my heart stood still—even Miss Carson was pale!

When we had rushed out of doors to see what had happened, or what was going to happen, I soon found that we had been needlessly frightened. Some of the broken timbers on which my house had been partially resting had given away, and the front part of the building had slightly descended, jarring, as it did so, the other house against which it rested. I endeavored to prove to Mrs. Carson that the result was encouraging rather than otherwise; for my house was now more firmly settled than it had been; but she did not value the opinion of a man who did not know enough to put his house in a place where it would be likely to stay, and she could eat no more breakfast, and was even afraid to stay under her own roof until experienced mechanics had been summoned to look into the state of affairs.

I hurried away to the town, and it was not long before several carpenters and masons were on the spot. After a thorough examination, they assured Mrs. Carson that there was no danger, that my house would do no further damage to her premises; but, to make things certain, they would bring some heavy beams and brace the front of my house against her cellar wall. When that should be done it would be impossible for it to move any farther.

"But I don't want it braced," cried Mrs. Carson. "I want it taken away; I want it out of my back yard!"

The master carpenter was a man of imagitation and experience. "That is quite another thing, ma'am," said he. "We'll fix this gentleman's house so that you needn't be afraid of it, and then when the time comes to move it, there's several ways of doing that. We might rig up a powerful windlass at the top of the hill, and perhaps get a steam engine to turn it, and we could fasten cables to the house and haul her back to where she belongs."

"And can you take your oaths," cried Mrs. Carson, "that those ropes won't break and when that house gets halfway up the hill it won't come sliding down ten times faster than it did and crash into me and mine and everything I own on earth? No, sir! I'll have no house hauled up a hill back of me!"

"Of course," said the carpenter, "it would be a great deal easier to move it on this ground, which is almost level—"

"And cut down my trees to do it! No, sir!"

"Well, then," said he, "there is no way to do but to take it apart and haul it off."

"Which would make an awful time at the back of my house while you were doing it!" exclaimed Mrs. Carson.

I now put in a word. "There's only one thing to do that I can see," I exclaimed. "I will sell it to a match factory! It is almost all wood and it can be cut up in sections about two inches thick and then split into matches."

Kitty smiled. "I should like to see them," she said, "taking away the little sticks in wheelbarrows."

"There is no need of trifling on the subject," said Mrs. Carson. "I have had a great deal to bear and I must bear it no longer than is necessary. I have just found out that in order to get water out of my own well I must go to the back porch of a stranger. Such things cannot be endured. If my son George were here he would tell me what I ought to do. I shall write to him and see what he advises. I do not mind waiting a little bit, now that I know that you can fix Mr. Warren's house so that it won't move any farther."

Thus the matter was left. My house was braced that afternoon and toward evening I started to go to a hotel in the town to spend the night.

"No, sir!" said Mrs. Carson. "Do you suppose that I am going to stay here all night with a great empty house jammed up against me, and everybody knowing that it is empty? It will be the same as having thieves in my own house as to have them in yours. You have come down here in your property, and you can stay in it and take care of it!"

"I don't object to that in the least," I said. "My two women are here, and I can tell them to attend to my meals. I haven't any chimney, but I suppose they can make a fire some way or other."

"No, sir!" said Mrs. Carson. "I am not going to have any strange servants on my place. I have just been able to prevail upon my own women to go into the house, and I don't want any more trouble. Dear knows, I have had enough already."

"But, my dear madam," said I, "you don't want me to go to the town, and you won't allow me to have any cooking done here; what am I to do?"

"Well," she said, "you can eat with us; it may be two or three days before I can hear from my son George, and in the meantime you can live in your own house and I will take you to board. That is the best way I can see of managing the thing; but I am very sure I am not going to be left here alone in the dreadful predicament in which you have put me."

We had scarcely finished supper, when Jack Brandiger came to see me. He laughed a good deal about my sudden change of base, but thought, on the whole, my house had had made a very successful move; it must be more pleasant in the valley than up on that windy hill. Jack was very much interested in everything, and when Mrs. Carson and her daughter appeared, as we were walking about viewing the scene, I felt myself obliged to introduce him.

"I like those ladies," said he to me afterwards. "I think you have chosen very agreeable neighbors."

"How do you know you like them?" said I. "You had scarcely anything to say to Mrs. Carson."

"No, to be sure," said he; "but I expected I should like her. By the way, do you know how you used to talk to me about coming and living somewhere near you? How would you like me to come and take one of your rooms now? I might cheer you up."

"No," said I firmly. "That cannot be done; as things are now, I have as much as I can do to get along here by myself."

Mrs. Carson did not hear from her son for nearly a week, and then he wrote that he found it almost impossible to give her any advice. He thought it was a very queer state of affairs; he had never heard anything like it, but he would try and arrange business so that he could come home in a week or two and look into matters.

As I was thus compelled to force myself upon the close neighborhood of Mrs. Carson and her daughter, I endeavored to make things as pleasant as possible. I brought some of my men down out of the vineyard and set them to repairing fences, putting the garden in order, and doing all that I could to remedy the doleful condition of things which I had unwillingly brought into the back yard of this quiet family. I rigged up a pump on my back porch by which the water of the well could be conveniently obtained, and in every way endeavored to repair damages.

But Mrs. Carson never ceased to talk about the unparalleled disaster which had come upon her, and she must have had a great deal of correspondence with her son George, because she gave me frequent messages from him. He could not come on to look into the state of affairs, but he seemed to be giving it a great deal of thought and attention.

Spring weather had come again, and it was very pleasant to help the Carson ladies to get their flower garden in order—at least as much as was left of it—for my house was resting upon some of the most important beds. As I was obliged to give up all present idea of doing anything in the way of getting my residence out of a place where it had no business to be, because Mrs. Carson would not consent to any plan which had been suggested, I felt that I was offering some little compensation in beautifying what seemed to be, at that time, my own grounds.

My labors in regard to vines, bushes and all that sort of thing were generally carried on under direction of Mrs. Carson or her daughter; and as the elderly lady was a very busy housewife, the horticultural work was generally left to Miss Kitty and me.

I liked Miss Kitty; she was a cheerful, whole-souled person, and I sometimes thought that she was not so unwilling to have me for a neighbor as the rest of the family seemed to be; for if I were to judge the disposition of her brother George, from what her mother told me about his letters, both he and Mrs. Carson must be making a great many plans to get me off the premises.

Nearly a month had now passed since my house and I made that remarkable morning call upon Mrs. Carson. I was becoming accustomed to my present mode of living, and, so far as I was concerned, it satisfied me very well; I certainly lived a great deal better than when I was depending upon my old negro cook. Miss Kitty seemed to be satisfied with things as they were, and so, in some respects, did her mother, but the latter never ceased to give me extracts from some of her son George's letters, and this was always annoying and worrying me. Evidently he was not pleased with me as such a close neighbor to his mother; and it was astonishing now many expedients he proposed in order to rid her of my undesirable proximity.

"My son George," said Mrs. Carson one morning, "has been writing to me about jackscrews; he says that the greatest improvements have been made in jackscrews."

"What do you do with them, mother?" asked Miss Kitty.

"You lift houses with them," said she. "He says that in large cities they lift whole blocks of houses with them and build stories underneath. He thinks that we can get rid of our trouble here if we use jackscrews."

"But how does he propose to use them?" I asked.

"Oh, he has a good many plans," answered Mrs. Carson. "He said that he should not wonder if jackscrews could be made large enough to lift your house entirely over mine and set it out in the road, where it could be carried away without interfering with anything, except, of course, vehicles which might be coming along. But he has another plan; that is to lift my house up and carry it out into the field on the other side of the road and there your house might be carried along right over the cellar until it got to the road. In that way, he says, the bushes and trees would not have to be interfered with."

"I think brother George is cracked!" said Kitty.

All this sort of thing worried me very much. My mind was eminently disposed toward peace and tranquillity, and who could be peaceful and tranquil with a prospective jackscrek under the very base of his comfort and happiness? In fact, my house had never been such a happy home as it was at that time; the fact of its unwarranted position upon other people's grounds had ceased to trouble me.

But the coming son George with his jackscrews did trouble me very much, and that afternoon I deliberately went into Mrs. Carson's house to look for Kitty. I knew her mother was not at home, for I had seen her go out. When Kitty appeared I asked her to come out on her back porch. "Have you thought of any new plan of moving it?" she said with a smile as we sat down.

"No," said I, earnestly. "I have not, and I don't want to think of any plan of moving it away, and I am tired of hearing people talk about moving it. I have not any right to be here, and I am never allowed to forget it. What I want to do is to go entirely away and leave everything behind me—except one thing."

"And what is that?" asked Kitty.

"You," I answered.

She turned a little pale and did not reply.

"You understand me, Kitty," I said. "There is nothing in the world that I care for but you. What have you to say to me?"

Then came back to her her little smile. "I think it would be very foolish for us to go away," she said.

It was about a quarter of an hour after this when Kitty proposed that we should go out to the front of the house. It would look queer if any of the servants should come by and see us sitting together like that. I had forgotten that there were other people in the world; but I went with her.

We were standing on the front porch, close to each other, and I think we were holding each other's hand, when Mrs. Carson came back. As she approached she looked at us inquiringly, plainly wishing to know why we were standing side by side before her door, as if we had some special object in so doing.

"Well," said she, as she came up the steps. Of course, it was right that I should speak, and, in as few words as possible, I told her what Kitty and I had been saying to each other. I never saw Kitty's mother look so cheerful and so handsome as when she came forward and kissed her daughter and shook hands with me; she seemed so perfectly satisfied that it amazed me. After a little, Kitty left us, and then Mrs. Carson asked me to sit by her on a rustic bench.

"Now," she said, "this will straighten out things in the very best way. When you are married, you and Kitty can live in the back building—for, of course, your house will now be the same thing as a back building—and you can have the second floor. We won't have any separate tables, because it will be a great deal nicer for you and Kitty to live with me, and it will simply be your paying board for two persons instead of one; and you know you can manage your vineyard just as well from the bottom of the hill as from the top. The lower rooms of what used to be your house can be made very pleasant and comfortable for us all. I have been thinking about the room on the right that you had planned for a parlor, and it will make a lovely sitting room for us, and that is a thing we have never had, and the room on the other side is just what will suit beautifully for a guest chamber. The two houses together, with the roof of my back porch properly joined to the front of your house, will make a beautiful and spacious dwelling, and it was fortunate that you painted your house a light yellow. I have often looked at the two together, and thought what a good thing it was that one was not one color and the other another; and, as to the pump, it will be very easy now to put a pipe from what used to be your back porch to our kitchen, so that we can get water without being obliged to carry it. Between us we can make all sorts of improvements, and sometime I will tell you a good many that I have thought of.

"What used to be your house," she continued, "can be jackscrewed up a little bit and a good foundation put under it; I have inquired about that. Of course it would not have been proper to let you know that I was satisfied with the state of things, but I was satisfied, and there is no use trying to deny it. As soon as I got over my first scare, after that house came down the hill, and had seen how everything might be arranged to suit all parties, I said to myself: 'What the Lord has joined together, let no man put asunder,' and so according to my belief, the strongest kind of jackscrews could not put these two houses asunder, any more than they could put you and Kitty asunder, now that you have agreed to take each other for each other's own."

Jack Brandiger came to call that evening, and when he had heard what had happened he whistled a good deal. "You are a funny kind of a fellow," said he. "You go courting like a snail, with your house on your back."

I think Jack was a little discomforted. "Don't be discouraged, Jack," said I, "You will get a good wife some of these days; that is, if you don't try to slide uphill to find her!"


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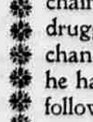
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## RAILWAY TIME CARD

| Leaves Omaha | BURLINGTON & MO. RIVER. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 8:35am | Denver Express | 9:35am |
| 4:35pm | Blk Hills, Mont. & Puget Snd. Ex. | 4:05pm |
| 4:35pm | Denver Express | 4:20pm |
| 7:05pm | Nebraska Local (except Sunday) | 7:45pm |
| | Lincoln Local (except Sunday) | 7:30am |
| 2:55pm | Fast Mail (for Lincoln) daily | |

| Leaves Omaha | CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & Q. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 5:00pm | Chicago Vestibule | 8:00am |
| 9:48am | Chicago Express | 4:15pm |
| 7:50pm | Chicago and St. Louis Express | 8:00am |
| 11:40am | Pacific Junction Local | 6:10pm |
| | Fast Mail | 2:50pm |

| Leaves Omaha | CHICAGO, MIL. & ST. PAUL. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 6:30pm | Chicago Limited | 8:05am |
| 11:00am | Chicago Express (ex. Sunday) | 3:25pm |

| Leaves Omaha | CHICAGO & NORTHWESTN. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 10:45am | Eastern Express | 3:40pm |
| 4:45pm | Vestibuled Limited | 8:40pm |
| 5:55pm | St. Paul Express | 9:30am |
| 6:40am | St. Paul Limited | 9:05pm |
| 2:30pm | Sioux City & Sioux Falls Local | 11:10pm |
| 6:30pm | Omaha Chicago Special | 8:00am |
| | Missouri Valley Local | 9:30am |

| Leaves Omaha | CHICAGO, R. I. & PACIFIC. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| | EAST. | |
| 10:40am | Atlantic Express (ex. Sunday) | 5:35pm |
| 7:00pm | Night Express | 8:15am |
| 4:50pm | Chicago Vestibuled Limited | 1:35pm |
| 4:50pm | St. Paul Vestibuled Limited | 1:35pm |
| | WEST. | |
| 6:45pm | Oklahoma & Texas Ex. (ex. Sun.) | 10:55am |
| 1:40pm | Colorado Limited | 4:00pm |

| Leaves Omaha | C., ST. P., M. & O. Depot, 15th and Webster Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 8:15am | Sioux City Accommodation | 5:00pm |
| 12:30pm | Sioux City Express (ex. Sun.) | 11:30am |
| 6:15pm | St. Paul Limited | 9:10am |

| Leaves Omaha | F., E. & M. VALLEY. Depot, 15th and Webster Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 3:00pm | Fast Mail and Express | 5:00pm |
| 3:00pm | (ex. Sat.) Wyo. Ex. (ex. Mon.) | 5:00pm |
| 7:50am | Fremont Local (Sundays Only) | |
| 7:50am | Norfolk Express (ex. Sun.) | 10:25am |
| 6:15pm | St. Paul Express | 9:10am |

| Leaves Omaha | K. C., St. J. & C. B. Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 9:05am | Kansas City Day Express | 6:16pm |
| 10:00pm | K. C. Night Ex. via U. P. Trans. | 6:30am |

| Leaves Omaha | MISSOURI PACIFIC. Depot, 15th and Webster Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 3:30pm | Nebraska & Kansas Limited | 12:25pm |
| 9:30pm | Kansas City Express | 6:00am |
| 3:05pm | Nebraska Local (ex. Sun.) | 9:00am |

| Leaves Omaha | SIOUX CITY & PACIFIC. Depot, 15th and Webster Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 6:15pm | St. Paul Limited | 9:10am |

| Leaves Omaha | SIOUX CITY & PACIFIC. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 5:40am | St. Paul Passenger | 11:10pm |
| 7:30am | Sioux City Passenger | 3:05pm |
| 5:55pm | St. Paul Limited | 3:20am |

| Leaves Omaha | UNION PACIFIC. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 9:35am | Kearney Express | 4:10pm |
| 5:20am | Overland Limited | 4:45pm |
| 2:30pm | Beatrice & Stromsburg Ex. (ex. Sun) | 12:05pm |
| 4:45pm | Grand Island Express (ex. Sun.) | 12:05pm |
| 3:30pm | Fast Mail | 9:40am |

| Leaves Omaha | WABASH RAILWAY. Union Depot, 10th & Mason Sts. | Arrives Omaha |
|---|---|---|
| 4:50pm | St. Louis Cannon Ball | 11:30am |


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