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ON A GATE POST.
CHAPTER I.
Ambrose Nettleson has what he thinks is a valuable manuscript. He thinks so, doubtless, because it records a part of his life. One night recently, while I was at his house, he brought out the manuscript and read it to me. Although I did not ask permission, yet I do not feel that I violate his confidence by giving, as nearly as I can remember, the contents of the paper which he treasures with such affection:

The prospect was not cheerful. I was riding a horse across a country whose loneliness was as deep as a sigh which bespeaks the long absence of some one. Night was coming on and a storm was gathering its forces. A frightened owl fitted past me, screaming in my face. The time of year was when nature hesitates whether to continue winter or begin spring. My horse almost shook me off when he stopped and shivered. The owl screamed in my face again. Dead leaves, for a moment would whirl before me, and then fall, scattered and torn: as though they had, by an angry hand, been swept from their long, damp rest, only to be mocked. "What a dreary, dreary place it is!" I mused. "I feel as though something terrible is going to happen. The air, just before the great agitation which must come, seems quivering in its desire to bear the sound of murder, murder! As I live yonder is a light. Is it possible that I shall receive shelter?"

Urging my horse forward, I soon reached a small house, near the summit of a desolate peak, overlooking the Arkansas river. I dismounted near the door—there was no fence around the house. My horse looked appealingly at me and without asking permission from any one within, I led the animal to a stable close at hand, took off saddle and bridle. As I was returning, the storm burst upon the river. When I approached the door, I heard a wail. I knocked and heard the wail coming slowly toward me. The door was opened by a girl scarcely more than twelve years old. Her face was the picture of despair. She said nothing, but pointed to a bed, upon which lay an old man, gasping for breath. Approaching him, I saw that he had but a few moments to live. The girl knelt beside the old man. He tried to put his hand upon her head. Failing, he looked at me and I assisted him. He tried to speak, but could not. The girl sobbed frantically. The rain poured down and the storm shook the house.

"He will never get well!" she cried. "My grandpa will die."
Yes, her grandpa would die. His life had already passed away. The hand lying on her head was growing cold. She looked at him and shrieked. What a night we spent in that house. The storm howled and the rain fell until nearly daylight. The girl, who I saw was intelligent, with an impressive face, said that her name was Munette Rogemon, and that since her earliest recollection she had lived with the old man who had spent the most of his time, since she had begun to talk, in teaching her.

"I have no relatives," she said in answer to a question.
"No friends?"
"No friends?"
"You have neighbors?"
"None. The nearest house is nearly eight miles away."
I knew not what to do. Surely the situation was serious. Early in morning, we buried the old man in the yard. As best I could, I made a coffin of a trough which I found in the stable. After the burial, I went on and found enough corn for my horse. I left Munette at the grave, on which she had, sobbing bitterly, thrown herself.

"Where are you going, little girl?" I asked when I returned, still finding her on the grave.
"How can I go anywhere?" she asked. "I have no friends, I told you."
"You cannot remain here."
"I cannot go away."
"I will not leave you here. You must go with me. My mother has no little girl. She will receive you."
Still lying on the grave, and without looking up, she replied:
"I will go and work for my board."
"You will not have to work. When I tell my mother of the circumstances under which I found you, she will take you in her arms. Come, get your clothes. It is time we were leaving here. See, the sun is shining beautifully. It is a new day for you."
Without replying, she arose and turned toward me. Her face, even aside from her grief, was so sad, and her eyes wore a look of such tender appeal that even though she had relatives I would have thought it my duty to take her home with me. She went into the

house and soon returned with a small bundle.
"I haven't much to take," she said. "Grandpa and I were very poor, and you see, having inherited his poverty, I am poorer than ever."
I was not surprised to hear her make such a remark, for I had discovered that she had never associated with children, and was consequently wise for her age.
"You shall have some nice dresses after while," I replied.
"Pretty red ones?"
The child was asserting itself.
"Yes, and blue ones."
She wept anew as we mounted the horse—she seated behind me. As long as we were within sight of the house she said nothing, but when we had descended into the thick woods, she said:
"I won't cry any more if I can help it."
"Your grandfather must have been good to you?"
"Yes, but he made me read many books that were very dull—great law books. I don't like them. His eyes for many years have been so bad that I had to do all his reading for him. He wrote a book full of awful curious things and murders, but one day when he found me reading it he took it away from me and burned it up. It must have been bad, and he must have been sorry that he wrote it."
The day passed rather pleasantly, with the exception of the influence of the night before, which naturally enough she could not dispel and which I could not keep from arising occasionally. We sat on a log and ate dinner, and Munette's remarks gave me additional insight into her close habit of observation. When evening came we stopped at a farm-house, where the sad story of the little girl awoke such sympathy that the kind-hearted housewife begged me to allow the child to remain with her.
"It is a question that she must decide," I rejoined. "What do you say, Munette?"
"I am surprised that she should ask me such a question," she replied, approaching the chair where I sat and taking my hand. "Would it not be ungrateful in me to desert you so soon, or to ever desert you?"
"She's got more sense than an old woman right now," said the host, addressing his wife. "Our twenty-eight-year-old daughter that married last month ain't a patchin' to this girl."
"W'y, jesperson," said his wife, in mild censure, "Margaret ain't twenty-eight years old."
"She's mighty nigh it."
"An' beside that," continued the woman, "she never had no chance."
"Didn't go to school three months outen nearly every year, eh? What show does a gal want, I'd like to know? This little creetur, I warrant you never has been to school."
"Oh, yes, sir. My whole life has been a school. The old house where I used to live contains many books. If you want them you may go there and get them. I shall never go after them, I could never read them again."
"Well, blame my buttons if I don't mosey up that way. I ain't much of a scholar, but I reckon I can carry through with a lot of them."

CHAPTER II.
My mother welcomed Munette, and when I related the sad story of how I found her, the sympathetic woman took the child in her arms and kissed her. A few days afterward, when I returned home after a short absence, she flashed upon me in a gay red dress. She was more of a child than I had ever seen her—more so than I had thought it possible for her to become. My mother was delighted to see her innocent pranks, and I, for the first time, kissed the child.
"You have kissed me at last," she said. "Is it because I look better in this dress?"
"It is because you look more like a child. Before, you reminded me so much of a woman."
"Do not women like to be kissed?"
I laughed and my mother, shaking her head—I can see her gray hair now—said: "Ah, Ambrose, our young girl has a very old head."
We sent Munette to school. The teacher, a man who had the reputation of being profound, met me one day and said:
"Munette is the most remarkable child I ever saw. She has read so many books and makes me such wise observations that I am constantly surprised. To tell you the truth, I cannot advance her. Not that I am not intellectually able—but er—because I do not think that at her age it would be safe. Therefore I would advise you to take her from school. I know the effect that too much learning has on youth. I know how narrowly I escaped."

When I spoke to Munette, she said: "That school is a very dull place. It is a constant hum of arithmetic. I don't like to cipher, as the children call it. Fractions make my head ache and miscellaneous examples make me sick. Let me study at home."
I took her from school. She was a devoted student, but was never so absorbed that she was oblivious to the little attentions which a woman of my mother's age prizes so highly. Munette grew rapidly and I was pleased to see that she was daily becoming more graceful.

CHAPTER III.
The war came on. How natural it is in writing a story, to say "The war came on;" but this is not a story, and nothing can be more natural than truth—although it is said to be stranger than fiction. Therefore, when I say that the war came on, I intend that the declaration should have its full meaning. I left home full of pride. I was captain. My mother prayed: but Munette did not seem to be very much affected. "Good bye," she said. "War is one of the incidents of civilization, as well as a feature of barbarity. I know that you will do your duty, and that you will not forget the little girl whom you once saw sobbing under the hand of a dying man. When you return, I shall be old enough to kiss you."
I looked at her in astonishment. Merriment sparkled in her eyes. "You don't like to kiss children, it seems."
"Munette, you are strange. I once said that I did not kiss you because you looked like a woman."
"Oh, yes, that is true. I thought that you did not want to kiss me because I was so small. There, now, captain don't swell up like a toad."
I turned away. She called me when I was about a hundred yards away and said: "When you pass the big gate, look on the right hand post."
I did so and found the words, "I love you." Under this I wrote, "And I love you."
I did not receive but one letter from Munette, and that might just as well have been written by a professor of geology, for its four pages were devoted to a description of a lot of pebbles she had found in a cave.
I returned home ragged and ill. Munette was delighted to see me. She was so peculiar, though, that I could not tell whether or not she still loved me. It seemed that she did not, for whenever I attempted to remind her of it, she changed the subject. Like all true lovers, I felt that without her my life would be a blank. I spoke to my mother concerning my trouble.
"She is a very strange girl, but I always found her frank, except when I asked her if she loved you, and she replied that the hawks had carried off three of the dominicker hen's chickens."
One day, in passing the gate, I wrote on the post the following:
"Will you marry me?"
Two days afterward I visited the place and found the word "yes."
Without further communication, except to appoint the time by "post," we were married. I did not find her disposition to be peculiar, only in the intensity of her love for me. "Why did you treat me so?" I one day asked her.
"The dominicker has a great deal of trouble with her chickens," she replied. Shortly afterward, when she thought that I was not looking, she threw back her head and laughed.—Arkansas Traveller.

Strange Freaks of Lightning.
Mrs. Gesner, who lives in a two-story frame house at Nannet, Rockland Co., N. Y., was sitting in her kitchen with her babe in her lap one evening recently when a heavy thunderstorm struck the town. While watching the lightning which flashed into the room through the windows, a ball of fire suddenly appeared in front of the stove close by her feet. The ball was a vivid brilliancy and made a noise like a humming top. Mrs. Gesner did not move, although thoroughly frightened. A moment later the ball exploded with a slight report, but did no injury either to the mother or her child or the furniture in the room. In a room on the next floor, however, Mrs. Gesner found that a mirror stand had been shattered. Several persons who visited the house the next day and made an examination of the place were unable to find where the ball had entered the building. It is supposed that it came down the stove pipe.

AN ARMLESS LADY'S WAY.
Deprived of Arms, but Not a Helpless Woman.
How She Threads a Needle, Writes and Eats by the Aid of her Toes.

"Now, let me show you what I can do; dinner'll be here in just a moment. Thread a needle? Of course I can; see?" and suiting the action to the word, Mrs. Thompson picked up a fine needle with the large and second toe of the right foot, held it tightly between the tips and, taking some yarn in her left foot, rolled the end deftly on a small smooth stone, put it in her mouth by bending her body almost double and deftly inserted the yarn in the needle, more easily than a bachelor threads a large needle with a very fine thread. Next she took a handsome tidy on which she was crocheting and with remarkable deftness held the work with her right foot, while with her left she guided the needle in and out, catching the thread with ease and fashioning the figure as fast as "my lady" in the sitting-room does with her soft hands. Her right eye giving her some trouble during this work, she deftly pushed back the spectacles which she wore and with the second toe rubbed the eyelid. Then she bent forward and brushed back a few stray hairs from her forehead. Taking up the pen between the large and second toe of her left foot, and holding a slip of paper with her right toes, she wrote in a feminine hand, small and rather neat: "He that lends to all shows good will but little sense. Ann E. L. Thompson. Born without arms, December 23, 1839, Ga." This written, she put the pen down, took up a blotter with her left foot, placed it over the writing and dried the ink. Taking up a pair of large scissors with the large and third toe of the left foot she cleverly cut off the portion of the paper on which she had written.

"Here comes my dinner. Now you can see me eat—not that it's such a sight, but you may find it odd to see one eat with toes instead of fingers."
Mr. Thompson spread out a napkin on the platform, and placed on it the dinner of a person in good health. Mrs. Thompson turned around in her seat, took up a cup of tea in her foot, stirred it up with a spoon held in her right toes, and half bending, half raising the cup to her lips, drank off the tea and placed the cup on the platform. Then she grasped a flat handled silver knife in her left toes, caught a fork between the first two toes of her right foot and cut some steak into pieces. Part of it was tough, but she had no more trouble in cutting it than an ordinary person would have. A piece of meat held on the fork was transferred to her mouth and was followed by a piece of bread broken from a slice by her large and second toes.
As soon as she had finished this novel meal Mrs. Thompson continued: "I forgot to tell you about my schooling. Oh, yes, I went to school. The pupils were kind and I had a little raised platform for my use. I held my books in my toes and read and studied as well as the rest of the girls. I held a slate in my right foot and a pencil between the toes of my left and managed to figure as well as anyone. My right limb is shorter than my left, and I learned to write with my left foot, as you have seen. I learned all that was taught in the common schools of Georgia before the war."

AN AGREEMENT.
"I am tired of life," said a young fellow. "I have met with nothing but continued disappointments, and I can see no use in prolonged existence."
"I don't see why you should live," rejoined an acquaintance. "I don't know that you have ever done any good in the world, and can't see why you want to live."
"What!" exclaimed the disheartened man, who had been looking for sympathy. "Don't see why I should live? Confound your ugly picture, I've as much right to live as you have."
There are times when it will not do to agree with a friend.—Ark. Traveller.

Martial Expenses.
Sam Perkins, of Hearne, Texas, is somewhat of a philosopher, and is always giving good advice to his friends. He is somewhat cynical on the subject of matrimony, having had some sad experience in that line.
Not long since his nephew, Sam Stinecomb, told him that he intended to marry Mary Bartlett.
"Has she got any money?" asked Sam.
"No."
"Have you got any?"
"No."
"My dear boy, don't you know that it takes a great deal of money to carry on war?"—Texas Siftings.

Thurlow Weed's Story.
How a Lawyer Came to His Defense—The Secret Out.
The late Thurlow Weed, who was sometimes called "The Priam of the Press," because he was the father of so many newspapers, once told me an interesting incident of his life which has been inadvertently omitted from his memoirs. It was during the war of 1812, when he was living in Cooperstown, N. Y., the home of the yet unfledged novelist, and was setting type as a journeyman printer. "I was 19 years old and I fell in love with Catharine Ostrander, my landlady's daughter, two years younger than I was. Her folks objected, very properly, to her marrying a strolling printer, without money or anything else, and I agreed to wait.
"About this time I got into a bad scrape. I, with three other young fellows, who were rather a hard lot, was arrested on complaint of four girls whom we met at prayermeeting. I had never seen them before, but we walked home with them, and they made a charge of improper conduct against us all. The others got bail, but I had no rich relatives, and prepared to go to jail. At the examination I told the justice I had no lawyer and no money to pay one, when, to my great surprise, a leading attorney of the town, whom I had never spoken with and did not know, stepped forward and gave bail for me and offered to defend me. I was Ambrose L. Jordan. I was delighted. I did not go to jail, and at the trial the girls voluntarily declared that I was not a party to the offensive transaction. I left town for a while, but came back in a year or two and Catharine Ostrander accepted me and we were married. I never forgot Jordan.
"Some fifteen years after that when I was in Albany in a position of some influence, we were making up the Whig state ticket in convention. The principal officers had been placed in nomination, when somebody said, 'Now for attorney general. We must have a man down in the middle of the state.'
"I named Ambrose L. Jordan and he was mad—our candidate and elected.
"When he came up to Albany he said to me: 'I have some conscientious scruples about accepting this office. You gave it to me because I defended you in Cooperstown when you wanted a friend.'
"Not entirely or exactly," I said. "I merely reasoned that a man who would come to the rescue of an unknown and penniless youth for the sake of seeing justice done had the right ideas to make a good attorney general."
"Well," he answered, "I am not entitled to the credit; you give me for either sagacity or right feeling. I gave bail for you and defended you because Catharine Ostrander came and made a fuss about you and wouldn't give me any peace till I did it. Better appoint your wife attorney general!"
"It was the first I knew of her agency in the matter. She had never told me during all those happy married years."

Bill Nye's Philosophy.
To the young the future has a roseate hue. The roseate hue comes high, but we have to use it in this place. To the young there spreads out a glorious range of possibilities. After the youth has endorsed for an intimate friend a few times, and purchased the paper at the bank himself later on, the horizon won't seem to horizon so tumultuously as it did aforetime. I remember at one time of purchasing such a piece of accommodation paper at a bank, and I still have it. I didn't need it any more than a cat needs eleven tails at one and the same time. Still the bank made it an object to me, and I secured it. Such things as these harshly knock the fluff and bloom off the cheek of youth, and prompt us to turn the strawberry-box bottom side up before we purchase it. Youth is gay and hopeful, age is covered with experience and sears where the skin has been knocked off and had to grow on again: To the young a dollar looks large and strong, but to the middle-aged and old it is weak and inefficient. When we are in the heyday and fizz of existence, we believe everything, but after awhile we murmur: "What's that you're givin' us," or words of a like character. Age brings caution and a lot of shop-worn experience purchased at the highest market price. Time brings vain regrets and wisdom teeth that can be let in a glass of water over night.

TIME TO CALL THIS IN.
"Mrs. Sharp can't you find anything else to do than blow me up continually, whenever I say that Dinah isn't a good cook, and you should discharge her and get another?"
"Well, John, if you don't like the way I take it, I'll find some other way to 'blow you up,' as you call it."
"How?"
"Well, Dinah might, for instance."