

JEMIMA.

Of all the pleasant places, on the best, I do believe, Was old Jemima's kitchen one snowy Christmas eve, When Ted and Eleanor and I drew up her big armchair...

A CHRISTMAS EXILE.

The day after Silas Pemberton's funeral Mrs. Probyn drove around to see Miss Jane Glenn. Her vigilant alertness had its challenge in the matter of the dead man's sister, and she met the suggested problem with the surety a great many people are privileged to possess when confronting other people's affairs.

Her fat pony slipped the bridle, as it always did, at the Glenn gate, where, in the spring, the red and white clover was an unbearably tempting, and even late in December stray chance blades were to be found. He nibbled eagerly as far as he could reach—for Mrs. Probyn, aware of his failing, always added a halter to his neck which no tugging for random mouthfuls could undo.

Marjorie Glenn, Miss Jane's young step-sister, listened to their discussion. She listened a great deal to Mrs. Probyn; it was much less exhausting than having to talk to her. "It's very sad," Miss Jane said, counting stitches in her knitting with a rigid forehead and wrinkled brows. "Very sad!" she repeated, firmly.

"She's really very repellent," Mrs. Probyn complained. "Well, I don't know," Marjorie said, perversely. "Perhaps we haven't encouraged her."

"Encouraged her?" "To be friendly?" Mrs. Probyn, on the point of remonstrance, remembered how little good it ever did to argue with Marjorie, and besides, she felt argument was unnecessary. She knew her view must be altogether the correct one.

and open. They have the grand trait of sincerity! They never hide things—never beat about the bush. Now Miss Nancy has been living here—how many years?" "Thirty," Miss Jane said, promptly. "No, more! nearly thirty-five."

"And in all that time?"—Mrs. Probyn dropped her voice into italics—"has she ever told anybody anything about her life?" "Well, you see," Marjorie said, innocently, "we've never questioned her! The neglect of duty was one of her faults."

"Thirty-five years!" Mrs. Probyn repeated, with dauntless zeal, "and I have been told that she has never had any intercourse with her neighbors. Her brother, poor old man! never looked happy."

"A great many Northern people were prejudiced against us after the war," Miss Jane explained. "Miss Nancy never has gotten over hers."

"It is with the individual!" Mrs. Probyn declared. "Now I am from Boston—and I am unprejudiced."

"But you hadn't a special reason to be bitter!" Miss Jane reminded. "That makes a difference!"

That it did, all those who knew old Miss Nancy Pemberton would have instinctively agreed. In the days following her brother's funeral it was a bitterness that ached. It made her manner stiffer and harder than ever to the few people who went to her. There was nothing they could do, she said; she wanted nothing.

and his father's stern anger and disapproval silenced him for a while. Two or three years later the uncle died and left Silas all he had—an acre or two of land and a negro slave, old and quite infirm. To Silas, who had all the sense of humor his family lacked, it was an amusing bequest, but his refusal to revoke his ownership and free the slave made the final bitter quarrel. Silas went South "to take care of his property."

After that his name was cut out of the Bible and his sister was commanded to forget she had such a brother. The times were electric, the sternness Hebrew.

Silas wrote his sister a letter after war was declared: "Take care of yourselves. The South is sure to whip!" he had asserted, "and then it will be a fine thing to have me speak up for you! I'll do it, no matter what's been said. And remember, Nan, I'll always take care of you."

This ill-spelled, rollicking letter had been a contrast to the forgettably gloomy atmosphere of her home. Her father's anger had been unswerving. The shame that his son's act had brought on him remained always unforgotten. The old farmer's soul was as bleak and bare as his hillsides in winter.

The other sons, the "four Pemberton boys," were among the first to enlist for the Union. "Sons to be proud of," the neighbors said, heartily, and no one ever mentioned Silas. It was only in despair his sister could think of him. She said nothing, but she knitted socks and made shirts for the four Union brothers, every stitch of her needle, every turn of her thread was interwoven with the thought of Silas.

"Be you upholding Silas, Nancy?" her father demanded one day. "You never say anything. No child of mine shall ever have to do with him again—nor speak up for him. When they do, they'll belong here no more."

Old Nathaniel Pemberton meant what he said, and Nancy knew it. Three-fourths of her agony was with him—mind, conscience, and prejudice; but another part of her did not. She and Silas had had a community of interests since childhood. In the breaking away from family tradition, and the sentiment of duty had come the feeling of bereavement almost as great as his sister's as if he were dead. Lots of others were in the same boat. Cruel years of suspense and sorrow. One of the brothers died in hospital, and he was brought home and buried with the honor given to a soldier who fought for his country, his coffin draped with the flag. But his death did not give Nancy Pemberton the pang of grief she felt for Silas, even while she stood by the open grave.

Yes, I be." She spoke as arguing with herself. "I ain't said a word all this time. It wasn't needed that I should. I ain't talked in thirty years. Seems like I sometimes feel so I must talk—if it wasn't to nobody but the tables and chairs. I've been a wicked woman."

"Oh no, Miss Nancy," Marjorie said, soothingly, but she was a little frightened, thought Miss Nancy showed no signs of hysteria. Her old face, strongly featured and wrinkled, was like flint, and her voice even and monotonous.

"Yes, I have," she repeated, dully. "Silas went wrong, but when he was dependent on me I made him feel all I was doing for him—all I had given up for him. I never said nothing, but he knew it! Seems like you don't have to say things; people can feel them. I hated everything he liked, and couldn't talk to him about what he had given up. I guess he was glad to get out of the house and sit at the post-office. He liked the folks and the work better than I did, but he found out they didn't really respect him. He heard one of the old soldiers he served with say a turncoat couldn't never be trusted, and it hurt him bad, though it wasn't said of him. He never went back to the post-office after that, and he missed it a heap. He just stayed here at home and tried to work in the garden and see to my flowers; he planted the sweet peas every year. He used to like to give to the school-children when they'd go by."

She looked through the window, and her maid's eye supplied the brave array of bloom—pink and white, pale lilac and deep maroon—and the bent, crippled old man stooping over them in the little front yard.

"He didn't ever complain, but I know he'd 'a' been glad if I'd talked to him like I used to in Vermont, and I never did. He used to be so fond of a joke."

"Dear Miss Nancy, everybody knows how good and faithful you were to him! You've stood by him these years." "How did I do it?" she asked, looking at Marjorie fiercely. "Don't I know how I did it? People don't know, but I do! Many a time he'd look at me cheerful and pleasant like and try to talk, and I'd take no notice, and answer short. He'd just sigh; he'd never say a word. I made him feel all the time that he'd made an awful mistake, and instead of helping him to bear it, I was always making him feel low he'd spoiled my life, too. Dr. Grange was talking to Silas once, and I heard him say, 'Whatever a man does to another, he does to himself, and I've been remembering it. Just before he died he said I had been a good sister to him and he hadn't deserved it.'"

Her hopeless tone gave an ironic significance to the words. "I wish he'd have gotten mad sometimes," she added. "He didn't have anybody but me. Spite of his coming here and his way of feeling, he was a stranger, just like me."

go on like I commenced." There was no appeal from her finality. Marjorie put out her hand in good-by. "I'm sorry," she said, gently. "Miss Nancy gave her usual limp hand-shake, but as her guest opened the gate, Marjorie followed her and made her pause. 'You've been real good,' her voice seemed to apologize for the lack of response no effort could subsidize from disuse. 'I guess it did me good to talk to you. You've been real kind.'—By May Harris, in the Harper's Bazar.

Concerning Eikons. In Russia, to many of the regiments ordered to the Far East for active service have been presented on the eve of departure, by the highest officials of the Czar's Government, eikons, or holy pictures peculiar to the Eastern Church. Each regiment carries the eikon with it to the front, the troops placing confidence in its miraculous powers, and trusting that their possession of it will carry them through the Russian arms. To General Kropotkin, on his leaving St. Petersburg were presented no less than eighty eikons, the eikon is regarded by members of the Greek Church, which has ninety-six million Russian adherents, with especial reverence and affection, and, like the crucifix among other sects of the Christian community finds a place in the household of the devout.

The word eikon is Greek, and literally designates an image, that is to say, a picture, statue, or relief, though in the Greek Orthodox Church it is now applied most especially to the representation of Christ or a saint painted in colors upon a plaque, so as to form a picture some few inches in height; an eikon may consist of one picture only, or three may be hinged together by frames, one in the centre and one on either side.

The history of the eikon, or holy picture, is of great interest, and forms a most important chapter in the history of the development of the Eastern Church. At a very early date mention is made of the use of images as aids to Christian worship. The historian Irenaeus speaks of the disciples of Marcellina as possessing images, which they were in the habit of crowning and placing inside the statues of the philosophers, such as Aristotle, Plato, etc. A life portrait of Christ was supposed by his sect to have been executed by Pontius Pilate.

It is not, however, until the year 306 A. D. that the definite mention is made of holy pictures. In that year, the Synod of Elvira decreed that pictures should not be placed in churches, "lest that which is worshipped and adored be placed upon walls." It is supposed that this decree referred particularly to frescoes, which, in times of religious persecution, it would be impossible to remove and hide away from profanation.

At the commencement of the eighth century a serious crisis occurred in the Eastern church. In the year 726, Leo, the Isaurian, Emperor of the East, endeavored to free the church from the idolatry of image worship. In consequence, a controversy ensued as to the employment of the word "idolatry," many theologians maintaining that it was permissible, without "idolatry," to offer a "relative worship" to the likeness of Christ. Among those who supported the relative worship of eikons were John of Damascus and Pope Gregory. The latter pointed out that the pictures themselves should not be worshipped, but were of value in that they served to teach by pictorial language that which should be worshipped. Moreover, he maintained that that which the educated were able to learn by reading, the ignorant could learn by looking at pictures.

It is a curious fact that the holy pictures of the present day are still for the most part exceedingly lacking in artistic merit, the style adhered to being of a rude archaic type, presenting the stiff angular, staring figures of mosaic work, a style which artists of the Italian school overcame in the fourteenth century, and of which Margaritone d'Arezzo was among the last exponents. The colors employed are usually brilliant, the eikon, at first glance presenting the appearance of a fourteenth century illumination.

For the Discontented. After all what more is there in life than a happy condition. The humblest laborer is the envied of the richest financier, if he has brightness and health about him. Though his home be rude and his greatest luxury the most trifling necessity of the millionaire and he has that priceless jewel, contentment, he has all that the Creator hath designed for man and should give unceasing praise for it.

A letter to the New York Sun was answered as follows last Thursday and we publish it, together with the Sun's comments, because we hope it will be helpful to those strugglers who think they have nothing.

"To the Editor of the Sun.—Sir: I desire an unbiased, unprejudiced opinion of what amount to in the world, just how much I may pass for as considering what I have in the way of education.

"Thirty-five years ago I was born on the East Side of New York City, close to where Tweed held forth. My parents were in comfortable circumstances, but reversed came, and at 10 years of age I found myself practically cut off from any hope of ever again going to school. Soon I was at work in a grocery for the large salary of one dollar and a half a week. From that time on until to-day I have been at work, hard. Sometimes I think I have done fairly well; again I feel I am a total failure.

"When about 12 years of age I began to read the Sun and have never wavered in the feeling that it was the one true newspaper. To that paper, to my pitance spent for the 150 books I own and the burning of midnight oil I owe to-day whatever may be my education.

"To get back to the story. I grew and waxed in strength and health. During the interval from my advent in the grocery store I have done as follows: I bought and studied a grammar, Shakespeare, sometimes read the Bible, the history of England, Greece, Rome, France, our own country; I have read Milton's Paradise Lost, Dickens, Poe, Hawthorne, Longfellow, the Congress of Mexico, and had a very good knowledge of the United States, and daily the Sun. I have read Munson shorthand, write it to-day, 100 words a minute (not for business), and can pound a Remington.

"For a period of ten years I have held a position in the government service. I am paid for my own good. My salary is \$1,300 a year. I have a good wife, a humble home, but good and nice and six children, all well formed, healthy, happy, better clothed than their father at their age, yet, better fed.