

THE TASK WE LOVE.

Here's to the task we love,
Whatever that task may be,
To till the soil, in the shop to toil,
To sail or the chartless sea.

ON HOGSBACK REEF.

Moored to the rotting pier a fisherman's dory, old and worn, swung on the smooth surges that ran under the dilapidated structure.

The man was young, roughly dressed in oilskins, old rubber boots, and a "sou'easter," and bore the unmistakable stamp of a fisherman.

"Say, Roger, look mighty like for a comin' don't it?"
The other looked up and answered, absently, "Sure."

"If I was you, what 'll you take me over to Siquinet for?"
The sitting man gave a slow and sidelong glance at the well-dressed stranger, spat pensively into the water, and returned his attention to the distance before he gave voice to the spiritless reply.

"Bout a dollar, I guess—when I go."
"Ah, right," said the other, vigorously and in a tone of relief. "And when will that be?"

"Maybe five minnits; maybe an hour. Waitin' for a buck of clams."
"But, man, it will be black dark in an hour!"

"Well, what of it?"
"Och, nothing! Only I ought to be in Siquinet right now. I got on the branch road by mistake, and there won't be another train out to-night."

"The stranger kicked aside a pair of old oars and, seating himself on the string-pieces, took a cigar-case from his pocket. It was well filled, but without tendering it to the fisherman, he selected a cigar and produced to light it."
"Say, he continued, rolling the Havana in his thick lips, and dressing his slightly grayed mustache with a pudgy hand on which glistened a diamond—say, do you know a chap named Maxwell over to Siquinet? His father's just dead."

"Sure," was the terse reply.
"Know him well?"
"Since I was a sucker. Decent kind of feller, too." The voice drawled as if words were an effort.

"Yes? Well, he's the Man I want to see. You know where he lives?"
The other turned and looked squarely at his questioner. "Lives close to me, Mr.—"
"Mr. Selover."
"Yaas. Mr. Selover. They call me Roger. I live to Siquinet."

He ought to git red-headed over it, but he's jest fool enough not to. Well, there's nothin' I can say, I suppose. I'm goin' up to the store for a minnit. That seegar o' yours makes me hanker for a smoke. No thanks—I wouldn't think o' robbin' ye."
And with that the speaker turned and walked slowly up the pier, his bronzed face indicative of extreme disgust.

The little building toward which he directed his steps seemed to hang on the end of the steep street, and an old sign across its front gave notice that one Thomas Pemberton dealt in general merchandise. The fisherman entered the gloomy and odoriferous interior, lounged up to the knife-scored counter, and greeted the proprietor.

"Hello, Tom!"
"Hello, Roger! What can I do for you?"
"Just want to buy a seegar an' borrow a lantern. Goin' to take a landshark across the bay, an' I reckon he's afraid o' the dark."

"Don't say! Who it he?"
"Feller named Selover; says he's come up to sell the Luella. What do ye think o' that? Nice news, hey?"
"Ye don't tell me! Feller with a gray mustache an' a flash ring?"

"Yaas."
The proprietor opened wide his eyes. "Him a lawyer to Lamson! he exclaimed, a mixture of astonishment and derision in his voice as he looked questioning at his customer; then he glanced at the two men sitting by the empty stove and jerked his head toward the rear of the store. At the unspoken hint the man called Roger followed with something like wonder on his calm countenance.

When, some ten minutes later, the two returned to the front the fisherman's face was flushed and he was whistling dory. Abstractedly swinging the borrowed lantern, he walked slowly from the store like one in deep thought. The proprietor followed him to the door and glanced over the bay.

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As the man ceased speaking, through the silence there came the muffled boom of a distant surf. The stranger caught the sound and perspiration started from his forehead. "The Hogsback!" he feebly exclaimed, turning as weak as the water about him, while the fog-beads hanging thickly on his heavy brows and mustache did not soften his expression of sudden fear.

"What do ye know about Hogsback rocks?" demanded the fisherman.
"Nothing but how Mr. Lamson has told me. I don't see how you got out so far."

"Me?" came the unexpectedly forcible return. "I didn't make the tide run an' the wind stop blowin', nor I didn't make no fog. What's more, I never asked ye to come aboard. Can't a man get lost?"
"—I beg your pardon. What can we do?"

"By thunder! I don't know what to do; ain't tryin' to do, as I see. If I had oars I'd try to row, but like a dum fool I forgot 'em. Ye noticed 'em lyin' on the pier, didn't ye?"

The lawyer nodded despairingly; the other fell into what appeared to be a perplexed silence. Presently the latter spoke again: "We're certain gettin' nearer them rocks! I can hear them breakers plain—can't ye? The tide is settin' us on strong, but we may fetch past 'em. By the Lord, I hope so!"

"Are we in great danger?" asked the lawyer, his heavy voice weakened by apprehension.
"Ye'll be ought to know what it means to go on the rocks in a surf," was the uncomplimentary rejoinder. "I'm fair to say that I don't like this traverse a damn bit better than ye do. Can ye swim?"

The perturbed passenger fairly groaned. "Not a stroke."
"Sorry I ever got ye into this muss; but it wa'n't my fault. How could I ha' known? Be ye a married man?"

"Yes—and two children."
"Well, we've got to trust in the Lord an' do the best we can. If we hit sand, we'll be ought to know what it means to go on the rocks in a surf," was the uncomplimentary rejoinder. "I'm fair to say that I don't like this traverse a damn bit better than ye do. Can ye swim?"

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"Oh, don't talk nonsense now! I'll give you anything to save me."
"An' what 'll ye give Max?"
"Anything he demands. Almightly Heaven! We can't haggle here!"

The fisherman's face changed. "Will ye give Max the schooner? I'm mighty sorry to be makin' terms with a dyin' man, but it's Max ye will have to depend on, an' I'm workin' for him."

"I'll do that, or anything. I'll see that he gets the schooner; I'll give you a hundred dollars if you send him—or any one. I can't be left here to die like a rat! Good God, man, how have you the heart to think of such a thing? Can't you—"

"Say, you'd better shut up about havin' heart," interrupted Roger, snapping his strong jaw. "Ye didn't care a cuss when I showed ye what a hole ye would put in me. I wouldn't take yer word for anything—if you'll excuse me for sayin' so."

"Why not? I will—"
"Why not?" came the explosive interjection. "Because you're a coward an' a liar; that's why not. Soon as ye get ashore ye'd go back on it all. Now I'll help ye on just one condition; an' that is ye put yer change o' heart in black an' white right now. If I don't show writin' to Max he won't come—an' ye couldn't blame him."

"I'd do it gladly; and I'd give you a check this moment, was the eager reply; but you know it can't be done here. Don't be absurd at such a time. I'll take my oath—"
"Damn yer oath!" was the vociferous return. "You write it! I got a pencil—a pencil is goin' in law—an' I can fish out some paper, too, an' there's the gim."

The fisherman drew a box of waterproof matches from his pocket and lighted the uninjured lantern, after which he produced the stump of a pencil and an old letter. Tearing off the blank page, he handed it to the lawyer.

"Ye got to be sudden," he continued, harshly. "Jest make a plain bill o' the schooner Luella to Mr. Thomas R. Maxwell, puttin' in the proper consideration, an' don't ye forget to sign yer own name to it, Mr. Jacob Lamson, or I'll let ye lie here an' rot before I'll lift a finger for ye."

The lawyer blinked. "Huh?" he ejaculated.
"Och, I'm on to ye, sir; ye an' yer play-in' off lawyer. Ye be a foxy villain. It was Tom Pemberton what put me wise, an' if ye hadn't been so cantankerous an' mean about yer seegars I'd ne'er come up to the store for an' an' knowed about ye. An' by gosh! I clean forgot the smoker, after all. Git a move on. It might be pleasant news to Max to hear ye are out on Hogsback in a risin' tide. Hurry up; time's goin'."

There was no geniality in the voice of the big man. If he was not honestly ugly he was honestly indignant, and Mr. Lamson, alias Selover, feeling himself completely trapped, bent his head under the lash of the other's words and wrote in silence. He made out a rough but legal document, the fisherman holding the lantern over him and eying the cringing figure with an expression of extreme disgust while the fog billowed thick about them. Just as the writer finished signing his name a roll of spume washed to his feet.

"Be quick! For God's sake be quick!" he said, thrusting the paper into the hand of his hoped-for savior.
But the other seemed to be in no haste then. "That 'll make Max's little gal the happiest woman in the hull o' Siquinet," he said, folding it carefully and putting it in his pocket. "That is settled! Come along; we'd better get to the shore side. I'm so chilled. Ain't ye?" The voice was now as smooth as air.

Mr. Lamson was chilled, body and soul; but he had other things to think of, his precious life was not yet out of danger. "How long before Maxwell can get to me?" he asked, humbly.
"Twon't be two hours; not long enough to drown ye, I reckon. You follow an' don't tumber."

He threw over the rocks, the lantern-bearer going easily and rapidly, the other scrambling along in his desire to keep within sight of the illuminated haze made by the light. It was a terrible journey to the city man. Hogsback Reef he knew to be a quarter of a mile in length, with about the substance of open water between it and the mainland, and let him obey to have gone twice that space before he protested. "How much farther?" he finally gasped.

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FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN. DAILY THOUGHT.

But words are things, and a small drop of ink, falling like dew upon a thought, produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions think.—Byron.

A "wonder bag" solves the gift problem to the friend who is going away. In this bag are stowed away remembrances from friends, each and all to be delightfully opened when on the ocean blue or in the speeding train. The bag, of dainty pretty cretonne, is made with a draw-string run through a casing large enough for it to slip easily; the bag may be either 18 inches square, or larger, or it may have a round bottom, say four inches in diameter, with sides 14 inches deep, including the heading; when the articles are all removed the bag will answer nicely for soiled handkerchiefs or for sewing.

Regarding the gifts, let them all be light and suitable, not just "ham-hazard" ones. Wrap each gift in white tissue paper and tie it with baby ribbon, each gift with a different color. Have the date on which it is to be opened and the donor's name on the wrapper, or on an attached card.

It may be well to mention some of the things which were in one much appreciated bag. Right on top was a writing pad or tablet, a few stamped envelopes, postal cards and a fountain pen.

Second, a silver pencil, with name engraved. Third, a pint size hot-water bag, with mercerized cotton knitted cover. Fourth, a tiny work bag made of Dresden ribbon, containing a few buttons, a thimble, a paper of assorted needles, a pin cube, a spool each of black and white thread and a pair of folding scissors.

Fifth, a small book with a Scotch plaid binding, having two verses for every day of the month (12 months).

Sixth, a pack of small cards for playing "solitaire." Seventh, a folding aluminum drinking cup. Eighth, Some of the best sweet chocolate wrapped again in paper napkins. Never give a traveler son bones; they are too sweet. Ninth, A leather-covered notebook. Tenth, A small pine needle silk-covered pillow—most refreshing. Eleventh, A bottle of lavender salts, with a glass stopper.

Twelfth, A tiny calendar. Thirteenth, A scarf veil, or shawl, as a protection against cool winds and draughts. And for the fourteenth, a pretty crocheted white mercerized cotton bag, lined with cheesecloth, filled with talcum powder, and drawn up with pink wash ribbon, and here and there through the packages was a lovely letter, one for each day, too, written by the 14 friends who had put so much love and pleasure in preparing the above "surprises."

The woman who has reached middle life and who studies understandingly the art of dress for herself considers harmony first of all, the harmony of line and finish, the selection of goods and apparel, because they happen to appeal to her love of the beautiful, or to her eye for color, but solely in relation to herself, her coloring, her figure, her height, her size. Some women try to do this, and fail because they do not visualize themselves as their mirrors present them; others never try, because they happen to be the modiste officers, or the shops afford, with a carelessness which is either the height of vanity or a complete absence of self-consciousness.

The woman with gray hair, however, who studies harmony in dress for herself, has few combinations to contend with if she will consider and select in the beautiful effects to be obtained in the use of black and white.

She may have fancied, with a shrinking of the heart, that youth's farewell has robbed her of all but the shroud of vanished years—black or white—but let her reconsider, and realize in the exquisite fabrics (the velvets, the gazettes, the tissues, satins, silks, laces and nets) which are now offered in both black and white.

Take a soft, silken black tissue, dull of surface, and put it over a shimmering satin in black or white, and lift it to a high note of white in the center with a lace edge, in the upper parts of the gown, and the effect has a fairy-like delicacy which finds its note of harmony in the hair, which is now "a crown of glory," and far more individual than any color combinations she could devise. Or take a thicker fabric, or even a silk or satin, and trim it with bands of shimmering embroidery in silk or net or gauze; make the bodice about the face all white, thin and transparent, with the deeper tone of black suggested about the waist and the edges of the sleeves yet never obtrusively, and you will bring out all the transparency of complexion and eye.

The woman with faded blue eyes and gray hair will almost invariably select for herself the amethyst or lavender tint, mournful and depressing in their tell-tale presentation, for they, as well as gray, any of its shades, bring out in contrast, and to an appalling degree, the sallow tints of the complexion, the yellow shades in gray hair, the lines that Time has penciled about the mouth and chin and eyes. But let this elderly blonde woman whose hair has grayed, consider carefully the delicate nuances in black and white in combination, and she will find that her eyes will deepen; the yellows which are her despair, the yellows in complexion and hair, will disappear; and she will present herself in harmony, which is her salvation in looks. This woman, however, needs more black in proportion to the amount of white than does her brunette sister, whose eyes and eye-brows are dark.

When I have any difficulty in getting my boy of three and a-half years to eat his food at the table we start a little game. We name each bite for a member of the family or for a little playmate or some place he has been, and it is surprising what an amount he will eat and enjoy.

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