

"Neglect and Dust."
A master mirror in a silent room
Became the sleeping spot of damp
and dust;
No face looked in its mystic depths to
bloom.
With smiles, and soon neglect and
rebel rust.
Destroyed its truthful speech
Then unto all and each
That came within its reach
It gave a blighting lie;
The young seemed bleared of eye,
And grim and sadly worn;
The old beheld their torn
And withered brows and gave
Themselves to dark despair,
Thinking that soon the grave
Would have them as its share.
And thus the mirror told its blighting
lies,
And filled its patrons with a deep
disgust;
It took their happy songs and taught
them sighs,
Serving its tyrant lords, Neglect and
Dust.
—P. M. MacDonald in Sunday School
Times.

IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

It was long past the usual bedtime of the household. The wooden clock on the kitchen wall struck a surprised and aggressive "ten," then proceeded to tick off the seconds with an emphasis in which there was something bordering on disapproval. The crackling fire in the stove had long since burned itself into a bed of silent coals; even the teakettle had tired of its monotonous humming, and now the thin thread of vapor which floated from its nose did so in a noiseless, half-hearted fashion.

On one side of the kitchen table Sophia Bently nodded drowsily over the pile of socks she was darnin'. Opposite her her husband pored over the pile of old almanacs before him, oblivious alike to the flight of time and the suggestive yawns of his wife.

Presently he pushed back his chair, ran on hand nervously through his sparse gray hair and gave utterance to an exclamation indicative, seemingly, of deep satisfaction.

"It's comin', nigh as I can figure out," he announced, "somewhere between the eighteenth and twenty-sixth of next month."

Mrs. Bently tossed her pile of socks on the table, and pushing her spectacles up to her forehead, rubbed her sleepy eyes. "What is it now, father?" she asked with gentle resignation. "A dry spell or flurries o' snow?"

"Tain't either one of 'em," he asserted. "It's a tornado!"

"A what?" said his wife, bending over to peer at him beneath the lamp-shade.

"A tornado!" he reiterated, with conviction. "One of the kind that'll blow down trees an' bust in winders, an', like enough, 'll unroof a barn or two. I tell you," he went on, "it ain't goin' to be any zephyr. I shouldn't wonder a mite if it was worse than that blow we had in the fall of '81. I'm goin' to write the papers about it tomorrow and give 'em warnin'."

Mrs. Bently did not seem duly impressed by the threatened calamity. Indeed, her smile, as she turned to her husband, was more than skeptical.

"When was it you said it was comin'?" she asked.

"Somewhere between the eighteenth and twenty-sixth," he replied.

"Pass me the last almanac," she demanded; and when he had done her bidding, she slid the spectacles to the bridge of her nose and slowly thumbed the pages.

"You ought not to have your tornado coming along that time," she remonstrated. "The third Thursday in the month comes on the eighteenth, an' that's the day the sewing-circle meets here. Then the twenty-third, which comes of a Tuesday, is the day that Mis' Bragg is goin' to have her birthday party. You couldn't have picked out a more unhandy time for tornadoes. Seems to me, if I were you I should put it off till the last of the month."

Harrison Bently smote an arm of his rocking-chair. "Ain't that just like women?" he burst out, in scorn. "Don't be so foolish, Sophy. You talk as if I held tornadoes in the hollow of my hand and turned 'em loose any time I was a mind to. I hain't got anything to do with makin' of it. All I can do is to warn folks that it's comin'—and it is, too, just as I say." She did not ask him from what source he drew his knowledge of the impending disaster, nor by what deductions he was able to approximate the time of its appearance. Precedent cases had taught her the futility of such a course. She returned the almanac, none too gently, to its place among its predecessors, and putting her elbows on the table and resting her chin in both upturned palms, she surveyed her prophet husband in a dubious silence.

"Of course," she remarked, at last, "most of the folks won't pay any attention to it, even it does come out in the paper; but then there'll be others that'll be just fools enough to. Folks like Liza Crowell, now, would not stir out of the house if they heard a tornado was predicted. I want a good full gatherin' when the sewing-circle meets here, an' I guess Mis' Bragg wouldn't ever forgive you if she knew you were the cause of keepin' any one away from her party. Since you know it's comin', why can't you tell just what time it's goin' to

be, instead of keepin' timid folks all wrought up for eight days?"

The forecaster sniffed scornfully. "I should think I was doin' my part if I came within eight days of it," he declared, "although maybe I can narrow it down a day or two by and by."

"The best thing you can do is to say nothing about it," Mrs. Bently advised, tartly. "More's likely it'll turn out like that killin' frost you predicted the twentieth day of last June."

At this open skepticism her husband bristled. "Well, there was a frost that night out in Illinois, anyway," he said in self-defense.

"And maybe that's where your tornado's goin' to be!" snapped his spouse as she gathered up her socks and went upstairs, to be followed presently by her husband, bearing in his arms his pile of treasured almanacs.

"It's all right, mother," he declared jubilantly the next morning, as he stood warming his hands at the kitchen fire, while Mrs. Bently bustled about, preparing breakfast. "That tornado that's comin' ain't goin' to interfere with your plans a mite. I had a dream last night. Seemed as if I was sittin' here in the kitchen, and all of a sudden up come some of the blackest clouds in the west that I ever saw. And when they got up overhead—crickly, how it began to blow! The limbs came off the elms as if they were lopped and the lilac bushes were blown flat, and one end of the shed was stove in. Seemed as if I was readin' a newspaper, an' I looked at the headin' to see just what day of the month it was, an' I saw it was the tenth. Then I looked at my watch an' noticed it was just three, though somehow the kitchen clock was strikin' six. So now, you see, I've got it all straightened out. That tornado is due here on the tenth, some time between three an' six."

"Well, it might just as well come then as any time," said Mrs. Bently, with a grim smile. "I hain't heard tell of any goin'-on round the tenth, so I guess twon't put nobody out much." "You get my breakfast soon's you can, will you?" he urged. "I want to get to writin' what I'm goin' to send in to the papers, so I can go up to the post-office in time for the afternoon mail."

Mrs. Bently, who was bending over to whisk a pan of well-browned biscuits out of the oven, looked up sharply. "I thought you an' Jim were goin' to plow the lower lot this mornin'," she said.

Her husband coughed uneasily: "I was intendin' to," he admitted, "but I guess now, so long as I know exact when this tornado's comin', I ought to write the papers about it. When a man can see the future, as I can, he owes somethin' to his fellow man."

"No doubt," was Mrs. Bently's acid retort.

Breakfast over, he betook himself to the desk in the front room, and from an old tin box he drew out a number of yellowed newspaper clippings. They all began in the same manner:

"Uncle Harrison Bently of South Boxford, who predicted the great March blizzard of '88, and who has not failed to give a correct forecast of the winters for the past twenty years, now comes to the front with the announcement," and so forth.

He read them over one after another, drawing from them, apparently, the necessary inspiration, for he caught up a pen, and with his spectacles pulled low on his nose and his tongue pressing out one cheek, he began to write laboriously in a heavy, sprawling hand. The morning waxed; the pen scratched on sturdily. Absorbed in his self-imposed task, he gave no heed to the loud tapping on the back door and the sound of voices in the kitchen which followed.

Noon was approaching, and the work of transferring his dire forecast to paper was nearing completion, when the door from the kitchen was pushed open and Mrs. Bently entered the room, to sink heavily into a chair near the desk.

"I wouldn't write any more on that, if I were you," she said, with finality.

Harrison blotted his last line and looked at her over the top of his spectacles with a scowl. "I've got it most done, anyway," said he. "What's the trouble? Dinner ready?"

"No, 'tain't dinner," said his wife. "Annie Evans has been over to invite you and me to her weddin'. She's to be married the tenth!"

The prophet squirmed uneasily in his chair. In silence he studied his wife's face. Mrs. Bently met his gaze unflinchingly.

"Now look here, mother, you needn't go askin' me to put it off again," he asserted.

"I don't see but what you'll have to," said she. I should be ashamed if I were you, to go spoilin' Annie's weddin' with my croakin' about somethin' I didn't know anythin' about.

You know what Mis' Evans is. If she sees anythin' in the papers about a

tornado comin' on the tenth, she'll make Annie put it off, an' there ain't anythin' in this world that'll bring

worse luck than puttin' off a weddin'."

Harrison got angrily to his feet. He caught up his morning's work from the desk, tore it into small bits and hurled it to the floor.

"Thunder an' lightnin'!" he exploded.

"What's the use of a man tryin'

to do anythin' when he's got a woman naggin' of him every minute? Let the tornado come, if it's a mind to. Let it rip things all to pieces an' blow down chimneys an' kill folks.

It's more important, I suppose, that Annie Evans should get married than that

folks should be warned of their dan-

ger. I sha'n't say a word about it. Now I hope you're satisfied!"

It was shortly after five on the afternoon of the tenth that heavy black clouds, copper-colored along their upper edge, began poking their ugly heads above the western horizon. Annie Evans's wedding was over; the bride and groom had departed stationward in the old but much-decorated depot carriage, and the many guests were trailing homeward along the dusty white road.

Harrison Bently and his wife turned in at their gate, and as they did so a warning rattle of thunder came from the clouds, which were now mounting the sky at race-horse speed.

"Mebbe that's your tornado comin', father," sniffed Mrs. Bently.

Her husband did not reply at once. All the afternoon he had been something of a specter at the feast. He had endured it grimly in disgruntled silence. Now, for the first time that day, a sardonic smile curved his thin old lips.

"Praps I wa'n't so far out to the way, after all," he remarked, at last, casting an eye at the blackening heavens. "I hain't seen any clouds that color since the time of the '81 blow. If there is a tornado, and you've cheated me out of the predictin' of it, I don't intend even to forgive you!"

Mrs. Bently indulged in an ironic chuckle. "I guess 'tain't nothin' more than an ordinary thunder-shower," she observed, as she opened the front door. "You farr round an' see that all the windows are shut, will you?"

A louder peal of thunder shook the house; purring gusts of wind caught eddies of dust and sent it down the road; vagrant drops of rain began to fall with a staccato rattle. Then the storm broke in earnest.

It was a storm long remembered in that section. Trees were uprooted, buildings unroofed, chimneys blown flat, and windows were driven in by the combined force of wind and hail. Even Mrs. Bently, who ordinarily had no fear of wind and thunder, crawled between two feather beds, still arrayed in her Sunday best, and lay there, trembling, until the storm had spent itself.

It was six o'clock when the clouds finally lifted and the sun shone brightly once more. Harrison Bently came out of the house and gazed mournfully at the havoc the storm had wrought. His face wore a strange expression of mingled triumph and disappointment. He strode to the front gate and stood looking down the road at the twisted, broken branches, which hung from almost every tree.

There was a rumble of wheels and round the bend in the road came the depot carriage, its gay decorations sadly bedraggled and spattered with mud. Opposite the house it drew up, and the groom leaned forward to shout to the old man, leaning dejectedly on his gate-post.

"This has been somethin' of a blow, ain't it? There's been washout down the line, an' there won't be a train runnin' till mornin'. I should most a' thought a man as good as predictin' as you are, Uncle Harrison, might a' give us some warnin' of this."

The old man shook his head slowly. "I'm done with prophesyin'," said he. "There's no honor for a prophet—not in his own country, anyway."—Youth's Companion.

My Pneumatic Snake.

Last year, in company with an eminent authority on automobiles, I went out Pimlico road for a drive in a new touring car. On the way we found a snake, an ophidian reptile with elongated body, imbricated scales, no limbs, and a remarkable dilated mouth, fitted with a tongue, at the termination of which were two filaments. My companion, who has owned many snakes, declared that this was hoop snake. It was exhausted; nearly dead, in fact, with much high rolling, and in mercy we took it into our automobile. The snake became so fond of us we could look him in the eye without a quiver. About four miles beyond the roadhouse we ran into a lot of glass and punctured a tire. There we were, far out of town, with a mighty slim chance of getting back by any others means than the trolley. Our snake, which in the meantime had recovered his health evidently appreciated the difficulty, for while we had the wheel jacked up to make an examination he glided up to us, took a long breath to fill himself with wind, and naively caused himself around our wheel, making an ideal tire and enabling us to return to Baltimore in time for lunch.—H. E. Warner in New York Sun.

Warden and the Liar.

A Colorado man who is visiting in Wellington told H. L. Woods this story: The game warden of Colorado was walking out in the mountains the other day when he met a hunter with his gun. The officer suggested that that ought to be a good country for hunting.

"It certainly is," said the hunter proudly. "I killed one of the finest bucks yesterday I ever saw, and he weighed over 200." It was the season when deer may not be shot without subjecting the hunter to a heavy fine.

"Well, that is a fine one," said the warden, "and do you know who you are talking to?"

"Why, I am the chief game warden of Colorado."

The hunter was only taken back a moment, when he said:

"And do you know who you are talking to?" The warden did not know.

"Well, sir," said the hunter, apparently much relieved, "you are talking to the biggest liar in the whole State of Colorado."—Kansas City Star.

Elderberry Patch.

Elderberries are being cultivated by the Pennsylvania Railroad on ground worth \$90,000 an acre.

Alongside the approaches to the Union Depot is a long stretch of ground that the company could not keep green, because of smoke and soot. Finally, elder cuttings were planted, they thrived, and now are in fine blossom.

The ground is among the most valuable along Liberty avenue, a sale across the street last week being at the rate of \$90,000 an acre.—Pittsburgh Dispatch to The Philadelphia North American.

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Dispatch to The Philadelphia North

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Saturday Evening Post.



TO SKIN POTATOES.

A piece of rough sacking will quickly and easily rub off the peel of new potatoes or carrots with much less labor and time than scraping.

CUTTING THIN GOODS.

Lay the goods between two sheets of paper and cut out paper and all. This prevents material pulling out of place.

TO KILL ANTS.

Small black or red ants may be banished by a little attention. A sponge is one of the best things. Sprinkle it with dry white sugar—the sponge must be slightly moist so that the sugar will adhere. The ants will go in to the cells of the sponge after the sugar in large numbers and can be destroyed in hot water and the sponge washed and sugared again and returned to the closet for more until all are caught.

FOR A ZINC TUB.

I am so happy over a recent experiment that I want every woman who has a zinc-lined bath tub to share my peace of mind. The water and the soap had so affected ours that ordinary methods brought no polish to it, but today it looks brand new, positively so. We had about given up trying, and decided to paint and enamel it, when I thought of something.

I moistened one-half cup full of whiting (less than two cents' worth) with clear ammonia, until quite like paste, rubbed it on and let it stay a long time, while doing other things. Then, with very little exertion, I rubbed it off, and such a sight! I had to brush up the dark gray dirt in the bottom of the tub, for I would not allow it to enter the pipes.

But we have an elegant looking tub.

—Mrs. E. G.