

In School Days.

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged banner waving;
Around it still the sunbeams glow,
And blackberry vines are running.

Within the master's desk is seen,
Deep-scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jackknife's carved initial;

The charcoal frescoes on the wall;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing.

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window panes,
And low caves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled;
His cap pulled down upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left he lingered—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the trembling of her voice
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word;
I hate to go above you,
Because"—the brown eyes lower fell—
"Because, you see, I love you."

Still memory to a gray-haired man
The sweet child-face is showing,
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing;

He lives to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her—because they love him.

—John G. Whittier.

MY ROBBER.

We had thought it all over; we had discussed it from every standpoint; we had argued it pro and con, this new and important question which had forced itself upon our lives, but at last we had reached a conclusion.

Perhaps to others it would appear trivial. To us it was of mighty moment, for it threw open our doors to the admittance of a stranger—in other and less enigmatic words, a lodger.

We were alone in the world, Helen and I, living in a pretty cottage left us by our parents, just on the outskirts of London, in one of the fashionable suburbs, too; for our father had possessed comfortable means, and had died believing our future was well provided for.

Unfortunate speculations and investments, however, had consumed so much of our capital, that, without encroaching upon it further, the interest would no longer support us.

For two years we had struggled along in the vain effort to make a dollar do the work of a pound, until we relinquished it as hopeless, and with the future merged into a necessitous and pressing present, the idea just expounded occurred to us.

It was in Helen's fertile brain that it originated. She was three years my senior, but even that made her but twenty-three. I was very proud of her, for she was very lovely, with a sad, far-off look in the great brown eyes, whose secret only I knew.

She never spoke Will Hastings's name. They had had some foolish quarrel just prior to my father's death, and soon after the regiment of which he was captain was ordered to India.

I did not mean to spy upon Helen's movements. It was quite by accident that, lying on the hall table, I saw a letter addressed to him in his London quarters, for the maid to give the postman in the morning.

I said nothing of my discovery, but I understood my sister's restless expectancy for the past few days, every time it came the hour for the postman's rounds.

I shared it silently, but in vain. We read one morning in the paper that the regiment had sailed, but from Will himself no word reached us.

It seemed strangely unlike him, this hard unfeelingness—but Helen had held out the olive branch—she could do no more. Only even yet, in the dead of night, when she thought me sleeping, I heard her sobbing in her room.

But I am digressing from my subject, and just now it occupied all our thoughts. We were sitting together at the breakfast table, when we first fully appreciated our own temerity at seeing before us in the *Times* the advertisement we had inserted with such care. How many times it had been revised before the printers had obtained possession of it was a secret locked in our own breasts.

"If he," the pronoun referring to the elderly gentleman for whom our advertisement was inserted, "should walk in now, it would be a look uninviting, would it?" asked Helen, forcing a smile and glancing at the dainty table set out with its sparkling glass and rich old silver.

The latter was a small fortune in itself—we could have lived upon it for a year; but it was an heirloom. Helen and I must have been in sad want indeed to have parted with a single piece. "No," I answered, cheerily; "let us hope he will arrive at such an auspicious hour as this."

But my hopes were to be blighted. During the ensuing forty-eight hours we had many candidates, but on one side or other some obstacle was in the way.

Our hearts sank as we reviewed the situation. Which one of them would we tolerate to share our home? We had almost determined to give it up—to struggle on yet a little longer—as we sat together in the twilight, on the evening of the third day, when there came a quick, decided peal to the bell.

Our little maid answered it. A moment later a firm, manly tread crossed the hall—a tall form stood upon the threshold of the room in which we were. The stranger bowed courteously. "May I enter?" he said, in a strangely musical voice.

I had been sitting on a cushion at Helen's feet, resting my head upon her lap. I was conscious that her soft, caressing hand had produced the wildest disorder among my loosened braids as I sprang up confusedly; but save that a pair of eyes momentarily regarded me from behind darkened spectacles, our guest devoted all his attention to my sister.

Quiet and dignified as she ever was, she bade him be seated.

"An elderly gentleman" our advertisement called for; we were alone, and so felt it would be more suitable; but was this man young or old? His voice was young, his step was young, but the spectacles he wore made him appear both old and ugly. Besides, in this half light it was impossible to see.

I struck a match and lighted the lamp. He gave a sudden start, and turned away his head.

"Pardon me," he said, "but I am suffering from an acute inflammation of the eye; I cannot bear any light." "Put it out, dear," commanded my sister, and I obeyed, my curiosity all unsatisfied.

I stood listening silently as he and Helen talked. He was greatly in need, he said, of a quiet home. Our advertisement had strangely attracted him, and, though perhaps not as yet decrepit by age, he felt he might be safely written down as elderly, especially since this painful condition of his eyes made it for a time impossible for him to do anything save sit in a darkened room.

His voice was in his favor certainly. His manner, too, was that of a man well-born, well-bred. I could see that Helen looked favorably upon him, and was not surprised when the arrangement was closed between them.

Rising to go, he handed her his card, and written upon it was his banker's address.

"You can make any inquiries there, Miss Ray," he said; "and, unless I hear from you to the contrary, I will take possession on Thursday next."

Thursday! and this was Saturday. Only four more days for Helen and me to be alone together!

Scarcely had the door closed upon him than I burst into bitter tears.

"He shall not come!" I cried. "We will starve first!"

"Why, Daisy, did you not like him, dear? Of course he shall not come, if you object; but he offered us such very liberal terms, and seemed so quiet and unassuming. I thought you would feel as I did, that we had been most fortunate. Let us wait until morning," she added, "before we decide anything."

Her advice proved good. The full glare of the day showed the thing in a more prosaic and sensible light. The very end for which we had been struggling was attained, and I had been unwilling to accept it. My ingratitude deserved to be punished.

The next week, in the twilight as before, Douglas Sage arrived. There was a large bookcase, several boxes of books, a reading lamp, an easy-chair, a varied assortment of smoking paraphernalia, as accompaniments, to give us renewed proof of a masculine element under our roof tree.

For two weeks everything worked smoothly. Except for a subtle odor of cigar smoke about the halls, and a daintily-prepared tray three times a day, we could almost fancy no change had taken place in our household.

Mr. Sage asked that for a time his meals might be served in his room, as his eyes could not as yet stand the light.

It seemed scarcely right to leave him all day alone in that darkened chamber, unable to read, to write, or to do ought to while away the slow, tedious hours. It was Helen's suggestion that she or I occasionally should read to him.

"At his age and in his condition of health it really seemed our duty," she said.

Somehow it fell to my share to carry out her suggestion. He accepted my suggestion most eagerly, and so it grew a habit that I should devote to him two hours of each day. For the rest of the time, as I have said, Helen and I might forget his existence.

He had been with us a month, when, one evening, we received from London a message that my father's sister, an old lady, was very ill, and desired that one of us should come to her at once.

I had been suffering all day with a nervous headache; therefore, it fell to Helen's lot to go. The evening seemed very long without her, as I sat alone in our pretty sitting-room.

Above my head I could hear our guest walking to and fro. He seemed strangely restless to-night. Had his restlessness imparted itself to me?

At 10 o'clock I closed the house and went to my own room, but was wakeful and could not sleep, even after I had prepared for bed; so, throwing on a wrapper, after two wakeful hours, I sat down to read.

In the *Times*, which I had carelessly picked up, was a long account of a robbery committed in a house located in one of the suburbs, where one of a gang of thieves had obtained admittance as a lodger, thus opening the way to the others.

The whole thing had been most adroitly done, and the police were on the track of the thieves, who it was suspected were in hiding and disguise.

Disguise! Why did this latter word suddenly brand itself upon my brain? Why did Douglas Sage's spectacles suddenly loom up before me? Why did I remember how many times I had instinctively felt the bright eyes which were hidden behind them fixed searchingly and scrutinizingly upon me?

A cold shudder ran through me. The silver. With what pride had we placed the heaviest and richest upon the tray which served our guest! Neither had we sought his references. His payments had been made promptly and in advance. He himself appeared so quiet and unassuming that it had seemed all unnecessary. But to-morrow—to-morrow I should satisfy myself at once.

To-morrow! Ah, was it not already too late? Just beneath my window there sounded a loud, low whistle. It was answered, I could have sworn, from an open window within the house.

I sprang to my feet, and stood with fast beating heart, listening to every sound. For a time all was still, save my own mad heart throbs.

A half-hour must have passed. Midnight had struck it seemed a century before, when suddenly I heard a grating sound, as though a lock was being filed.

Why was this necessary, when their confederates could throw open to them the doors? for I no longer entertained any doubt as to the real status of our guest. Everything went to prove it. His close confinement to the house during the day, the uncertain view we had ever obtained of his face, the voice of youth and assumption of old age, the spectacles which seemed so effectual a disguise—all, all! But my enlightenment had come too late.

The grating sound continued, when suddenly there came to me a desperate courage. I was alone, an unmarried girl, but I would confront those midnight marauders, possibly murderers, and cow them by my very helplessness. I threw open my door and passed swiftly down the hall. Yes, Mr. Sage's door was ajar. His room was empty. I ran on down the stairs. The dining-room was in darkness; but, as I crossed the threshold, a light flared up. Mr. Sage stood beside the table, the obnoxious glasses gone, a pistol tightly held in his clenched hand.

I now saw him as he was, a man who could not have attained his thirty-fifth year—a man both young and singularly handsome, now that one could see the bright, flashing eyes.

"Miss Margaret—" he began, in a quick, alarmed tone, but my wrath could no longer be repressed.

"Coward! traitor!" I exclaimed.

But at that instant there was a sudden noise as the window was opened, a blinding flash, a deep groan, then my courage fled and I fainted. When I opened my eyes, Douglas Sage was holding me in his arms, anxiously bending over me.

"Poor child," he murmured, tenderly.

"How dare you!" I cried, wrenching myself from him; then, catching sight of a policeman in uniform, I added, wildly, "arrest this man!" and again fainted away.

A long fever followed. For days I lay unconscious and delirious. They would not let me talk, even after I had recovered my mental balance. Fresh flowers and rare fruits filled my room during the long period of my convalescence.

"Helen, you must not!" I declared. "It is wrong to be so extravagant."

But she only smiled, and my luxuries were more plentiful than before.

But one day, as I was sitting, dressed for the first time, in a large easy-chair, there came a quiet tap at my door.

"Come in!" I called.

And then I thought my delirium had returned, for in walked my robber. I turned deadly pale, and felt as though I might again disgrace myself by fainting; but somehow the first tones of his voice reassured me.

From his lips I then learned my mis-

take. My delirium had revealed it all to him.

"Poor little girl!" he said. And then he told me how, restless and unable to sleep, he, too, had heard the unwonted sounds and stolen downstairs, pistol in hand, to discover the cause.

My answering signal, then, was all my excited imagination, for Mr. Sage had been barely in time to save the thieves from entering, and to put a bullet through one man's leg and into another's shoulder, to guarantee their capture.

A hot blush of shame rose to my cheek as I listened and looked into the face of the man I had suspected of such villainy. I understood now from whence came the flowers and fruits, but when I tried to thank him he would not let me.

"I cannot be absolved from my sin, Miss Margaret," he said, "for do you know I am not yet sure but that I shall turn thief and steal from this house its most priceless treasure."

What could he mean, I wonder? Why did his words thrill me with new, sudden happiness? And, doubtless, my reader has guessed; yes, guessed rightly. But there is more yet to tell; for one day, when I had grown quite well and strong again, Helen came to me with the old sad look gone from the brown eye and a wonderful new light there.

"The Eleventh has come home, Daisy," she whispered, "and I have seen Will. It was all a cruel mistake, dear. He never received my letter, Oh, Daisy! I am so happy!"

And then she broke down into glad tears.

Well, Will was sadly impatient. He said he had been cheated out of years enough—he must claim his bride at once; and as I could not be left alone to take care of the silver, Douglas said he must guard it with me—that I had called him a robber and robber he must prove himself.

"But, darling," he added, "you share the crime; for it was you who stole my heart long ere you had given me the sweet gift of yours in return."

The Career of Dan Rice.

Dan Rice, who was the best known showman in the country twenty-five years ago, has experienced strange vicissitudes during the last ten years, and has varied his professional career with occasional experiments in the line of religious exhortation and temperance crusading. Wednesday the court of Erie county granted his wife a divorce on the ground of desertion, and thus terminated what was in its earlier days a romantic union. In 1845 the showman was exhibiting in Girard, Erie county, and his attention was attracted by a remarkably beautiful child in her nurse's arms. He asked her name, and on subsequently fixing his residence in Girard, he kept up a lively interest in the girl, who was the daughter of a leading citizen, deacon in the Presbyterian church and president of the local bank. At that time Dan rolled in wealth and spent his money lavishly, not only in the erection of a magnificent house, but in adorning the town.

He was married to an estimable woman, who had been on the stage, and about fifteen years after his arrival in Girard she sued for and obtained a divorce. Shortly afterward Dan carried off his youthful innamorata, much against the wishes of the paternal deacon, who disinherited his daughter, but when Dan failed in 1873 was reconciled and took them to his home. The showman's extensive property was sacrificed piecemeal in unprofitable ventures, and his life grew irregular. His professions of temperance and religion were looked upon as advertising schemes, and his wife grew cold and finally declined to see him. It is said he refused to oppose the divorce. Rice began his career as a jockey boy for Henry Clay on his Lexington farm, and at one time was considered worth half a million, owning among other property an opera house in New Orleans.—*Philadelphia Times*.

The Oldest Pensioner.

Maryland can probably claim the oldest pensioner in the United States in the person of Mrs. Elizabeth Cretzer, who resides in the Ninth district of Baltimore county, upon the York road. She was 103 years old in last December, and is the widow of John Cretzer, of Captain Parry's company of Maryland militia, who served in the year of 1812. Notwithstanding her advanced age she can walk about the house and attend to household duties. She has the record of her birth and her marriage to John Cretzer in the year 1801. Her sight and hearing are good, and her mental faculties are in an excellent state of preservation. On a recent Tuesday she was driven to receive her pension payment at Major Adcox's office on Calvert street, and he would not give her the trouble to alight; he carried her cheek to her at the carriage, and found her thoroughly cheerful and in the humor for quite a talk. She is believed to be the oldest pensioner, if not the oldest person in the United States.

LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

Advice to Girls.

Do not estimate the worth of a young man by his ability to talk soft nonsense, nor by the length of his mustache.

Do not imagine that an extra ribbon tied about the neck can render the defect of a soiled collar and untidy dress.

If your hands are browned by labor, do not envy the lily fingers of Miss Fuss and Feathers, whose mother works in the kitchen, while the daughter lounges in the parlor.

Do not waste your tears on the imaginary sorrows of Alonzo and Melissa, nor the trials of the dime novel heroines. Seek rather to alleviate the woes of the suffering ones of earth.

Knick-Knacks for Fall Toilets.

All sorts of knick-knacks add to the dressy effect of fall toilets. Quaint jewelry, cocks' heads, or the entire bird in real, imitation, or semi-precious jewels, tortoiseshells, parrots and owls, tiny silver mice, parquets of green enamel perched on a gold stick, with a pearl or diamond at each end, together with bits of gold lace, silk brocade, figured velvets, gold lace and antique embroidery are introduced into costumes with marvelous effect nowadays. Everything in our mothers' or grandmothers' scrapbags and wicker chests is unearthed to combine with cashmere, or satin, or moire—things a hundred years old with ribbons of yesterday, and ancient jewels with fresh novelties. Nothing need be scorned or thrown away.—*New York Sun*.

A Mountain Heroine.

At one of the watering-troughs, deep in the mountains, we stopped at a little cabin, and, at the clatter of the mail-bag on the loose planking of the low porch, there appeared at the door a most remarkable apparition—a woman, short of stature, and of wiry figure that spoke of long endurance. She had a pleasant, sunburnt face, crowned with a shock of hair, flying in a tangled freedom peculiarly its own. Her dress, of faded calico, reached just below her knees, and left in plain view a well-worn pair of high boots, from the same lot as her husband's. This woman was Mrs. McNulty, and, as the stage-driver afterward told us, was, in her way, quite a heroine, and much respected through the mountains for her courage. The origin of her earliest claim to notoriety dates back some three years. In front of her house, on the stage road, is one of the most dangerous points of the mountain highway, where the road turns sharply round a curve and crosses a narrow and unsteady bridge. Just above her house, late one afternoon, some break had occurred in the harness of the horses attached to the regular stage, which was coming down the mountain with city passengers. As the driver descended from his box to repair the damage, the horses became frightened and started at breakneck pace down the mountain. The courageous little woman, listening at her cabin door for the evening mail, saw, as the coach dashed in sight, the danger which lay before the helpless passengers, and flinging herself before the running horses, by superhuman strength, brought them, trembling, to a halt. The poor woman, bruised and wounded from being dragged by the running horses, was carried fainting to her bed and lay there for weeks, suffering from her more than womanly heroism. A purse was made up among the grateful passengers whose lives she had saved, and her name has grown to be a synonym through the mountains for bravery.—*San Francisco Argonaut*.

Fashion Notes.

Polonaises remain in vogue. Grenada lace is the novelty for mantles.

Pointed waists laced behind are revived.

Fluffy hair is restored to favor for ladies.

King Charles collars are worn by children.

Colored pearl jewelry is fashionable for full dress.

The season promises to be one of unusual brilliancy.

Two yards and a half is a sufficient length for the train of an evening dress this winter.

Scarfs of chenille and of black Spanish lace are very fashionable to wear over light dresses.

The "John" redingote, an English affair resembling a coachman's livery, is still in great favor.

Puffs of surah instead of frills are frequently seen in the neck and at the wrists of imported dresses.

There is not much chance for variety in dress; for instance, there are only 200 styles in silk stockings.

Monograms, ciphers and initials play a prominent part in the ornamentation of toilets and their accessories.

Straight linen bands are revived for collars; the cuffs to match are square, and fastened with linked buttons.

Large crosses are again very fashionable as pendants, supported by a large

cable chain half resting on the shoulders.

New walking jackets have the three seams of the back prolonged until they meet in a point below the waist, and the skirts are added all around the waist.

Many bunnets of large size are trimmed with a wreath of roses or other flowers within the brim, while feathers, pompons and plush or wide ribbons trim the outside.

White evening dresses will still be worn this winter, but their color will be the only touch of simplicity about them, the richest stuffs being made up in the most elaborate styles.

Rosettes of six short loops are pretty substitutes for bows. They are fastened with silver or gold pins and worn at the throat or at any point on the square or pointed opening at the throat that one prefers.

New linen collars are of the severest simplicity, and are worn with no fastening but a small brooch or a slender lace pin. Children's collars, says the *Basar*, are bordered with Tunis lace or have their edges cut out in squares and filled in with Valenciennes.

The object in trimming a poke bonnet is to show its shape and consequently the ribbons are set smoothly upon it and feathers curl away from it so as to leave its outline in all its beauty. Perhaps you think that it has no beauty, but that is because you do not know.

The new way of arranging a flounce is to use the double box-plait, making it five inches wide on the top, with side-plaits an inch wide, and making the plain spaces so wide that there are only nine plaits in the whole flounce. These flounces are hemmed by hand, and a three-inch plaiting is sewed under their lower edges.

For boys, the court valet costume is the style. It is a square coat fitted in the back, high in the neck, and fastened with small buttons of cut steel down the front to the waist line, where it is slanted off to the back, showing a comparatively long waistcoat with pockets and cut steel buttons. The plain sleeves are trimmed with similar buttons.

The American frock for small girls in its latest modification is quite loose, with a collar around the neck, plain in front, plaited or gathered at the waist down at the back, while a sash or scarf, crossed over the plaits a good deal below the waist line, leaves the frock quite loose, hangs a little on the right side, and is tied in a large bow on the left.

Cheviot suits are made up with long jackets, with skirts provided with two box plaits in the back, but otherwise perfectly plain, and a little cape fastened by a tab at the throat. The collar is standing, the cuff a straight piece slanted at one end, which is placed on the outside of the wrist, and the pocket welts are perfectly plain. Buttons and rows of stitching are the only ornaments, and not too many of either of these are used.

A Hard Town.

A correspondent of the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* having reached the terminus of the Northern Pacific railroad thus describes the new town of Glendive and its peculiarities:

Of course Glendive is a hard town. There are no school-houses or churches or sewing societies or Sunday-schools as yet, and the saloons, gambling dens and dance-houses are plenty. But all this human scum will float away as the track is pushed on, and the substantial, respectable citizens will remain to make life what it is at Fargo or Jamestown or Bismarck, peaceful and agreeable. Last December the first shanty was built here, of logs, and not until June was a dressed piece of timber brought into Glendive. Give it time.

The cemetery of a new town has a fascination that is almost irresistible. Several years ago a land agent, in advertising the attractions of the region in which he had some "town sites" to sell, called attention to the surpassing healthfulness of the locality by the unique and somewhat startling announcement in large letters:

"We had to hang a man to start a graveyard here."

The burial places of new towns are often authentic indexes to the character of their population. Glendive is now about four months old, and in the cemetery over yonder there are nine mounds—all new. At the head of each there is a pine board, but only two or three bear inscriptions. The nine graves represent the necrology of the place. Five contain men who "died with their boots on"—murdered in brawls; two are filled with suicides—both women, Magdalens of the lowest class, who follow "the end of the track." There are dozens of such in this community; women who have followed "the end of the track" from Bismarck here, and will go along with it, with the rough men who shovel the grades, lay the ties and spike the rails. Two of them found "the end of the track" at Glendive, and lie in unmarked, soon forgotten graves, with a hereafter not more wretched than their past.