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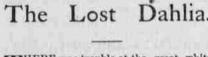
CLEANSING FIRES.

Let thy gold be cast in the furnace,-Thy red gold, precious and bright : Do not fear for the hungry fire. With its caverns of burning light, And thy gold shall return more precious. Free from every spot and stain: For gold must be tried by fire, As a heart must be tried by pain?

1

In the cruel fire of sorrow Cast thy heart, do not faint or wall; Let thy hand be firm and steady. Do not let thy spirit quall. But wait till the trial is over, And take thy heart again ; For, as gold is tried by fire, So a heart must be tried by pain :

I shall know by the gleam and the glitter Of the golden chain you wear. By your heart's calm strength in loving. Of the fire you have had to bear. Beat on, true heart, forever : Shine bright, strong, golden chain: And bless the cleansing fire, And the furnace of living pain :



THERE was trouble at the great white stuccoed house on the hill-side, with its extensive gardens and grounds, over-looking the little village. Its mistress, Mrs. General Harmon was very angry ; and the gardener was in disgrace, threatened with dismissal ; and all the servants and all the family were more or less uncomfortable through the vexed temper of Madame. And yet the cause of it all was a very slight thing in itself-merely the loss of a flower-

gentle, kindly-looking girl of fifteen-"not lazy, only old you know, and not so brisk as people who are younger. He has been complaining of rheumatism-

"You know nothing about it, child," said her mother, impatiently. " My splendid dahlia !" here the tears actually came into her eyes, and she added, "I gave the value of twenty-five dollars for it; and I would give as much again for its recovery." "Fifty dollars, mamma, for a flower !"

"For a flower such as that. There is but one other like it in the world."

"Then we will find it, mamma !" shouted Walter, a few years younger than his sister, "me and Willie. You promise to give twenty-five dollars to any one who will find your lost dahlia-root ?"

"Yes," replied the mother, "to you or any one else who will find and bring it to me unhurt."

But though the boys, as well as Emma and the gardener, and some of the servants searched all the afternoon, the missing root was not to be discovered.

So Mrs. General Harmon, never at any time a very reasonable woman, mourned over her loss, and partly soothed her aggrieved feelings by dismissing the old Scotch gardener, Duncan, and taking in his place one younger and more active, though by no means as skilful as his predecessor. And Duncan smarting under a sense of injustice, went forward and offered his services to Mrs. Rivers, who had long been desirous of possessing them. Thus Mrs. Harmon "spited nobody but herself," as is generally the case when people act hastily in a passion.

Now Duncan's successor at Fairview was a young man named William Watson, who had long been in love with the pretty daughter of the widow Luttrel, who occupied that poor little cottage at the far end of the village street, and eked out a scanty pittance by taking in washing, or any such job that offered, whilst Rose went out sewing when she could find the work to do. Watson had long been anxious to supplant Duncan, and it was, in fact, partly owing to his artful representations that he at length succeeded ; and his hope was now, that in view of the comfortable salary and the pretty gardener's cottage at Fairview, Rose might be induced to marry him. Great therefore was his chagrin, as well as resentment, when he found his offer of marriage for a second time rejected by the daughter of the widow ; and his illfeeling was increased on learning that Rose had all along preferred his own cousin, Robert Ward ; and that the two were to be uried as soon as Ward could afford to purchase or build a small cottage. But then, the young man was, like his affianced, very poor, doing a small trade in the village as blacksmith's assistant; and it would probably be a long time that he and Rose would have to wait for their cottage. Meantime, thought Watson, who was vindictive, something might be done to break off the match : and he never wished this so ardently as when he saw the young couple, bright and happy looking, despite their poverty, saunter slowly past his own door on Sunday evenings on their way to and from church, and fancied in their smiling looks that they were triumphing over him.

"Oh, no, mamma !" observed Emma, a front of his door, on which was written, "This property for sale, cheap !" "Hello !" said farmer Brown, drawing

up, "Sellin' out hey ?" "Wouldn't put up this'ere if I wan'n't."

answered the smith who was a gruff fellow. "Wal, now ! and your doin' the best blacksmith business in the hull country !" said the old man in a tone of disappointment.

"Mebbe I can do a better still," answered he, coolly.

"You don't say? Whereabouts, now?" "In California. Dick's makin' lost o' money over thar, and he's writ to me to come out the first minute I can, and jine him in a business he's about to undertake." "To be sure ! and you'll go soon's the place is sold ?"

"Yes ; the lot, and the smithy, and the house over thar," nodding his head toward a nice little white cottage with its portico embowered in multiflora roses, which stood a little apart from the shop. "Going to let it off cheap, as in this case time's of more value to me than money. Five hun-

dred the whole lot !" "Wal, now, that is a low figure !"

"Must be paid, though, before the first of September, as I'm bound to be off by that time. Wouldn't let it go off so easy if I warn't pressed for time, and obliged to give such short notice."

The smith finished nailing on the board as he spoke, and returned to his shop, whilst farmer Brown drove on.

"I say, Rosey, that'd be a first-rate chance for Bob Ward," said the old man, turning to her with a look of interest. "Better speak to him about it, my girl. He's a fine steady fellow, and you both deserve to do well."

"I don't think he has the money," said the girl, blushing, but with a wistful look back at the smithy and the cottage, with its garden, its field, and "cow-lot."

"Wal," said the farmer, thoughtfullp, "I might possibly help him along a little. He's sure to succeed at the Five Corners, the best place for a smithy in the country round, and though I ain't much to spare, I wouldn't see him at a loss for want of a few dollars or so."

All that day Rose Luttrel's thoughts were running less upon her work than on the pretty cottage at the Five Corners; and when Robert Ward came in, late in the evening for the usual half-hour's talk with her, she told him of it.

"I can't do it, Rose," he said, regretfully. "I've but \$300 in the, world, and you know how much there is to do with that. And yet it's such a capital place for business !"

Just left a little while ago, and promised they fa' on this at the fair to-morrow. to get the money out o' bank to-morrow at De'il kens how it kem here, then !" Lexington. Don't intend to take down notice till bargain's made and money paid

cash. First that puts the money in my hand's to have it." Rose walked on. Her feeling of indifference toward William Watson was changed into one of indignation. What could he want of the smithy, who was a gardener, and had a cottage of his own? No doubt the proposed purchase was to spite her and Robert, and, as the thought occurred, she perceived the object of her indignation approaching on horseback round a turn of the road. She did not desire to meet him. Not only was she angry with him, but he young man with whom a girl would be willing to be caught walking alone on a secluded road ; and Rose, seeing that she had not been perceived turned hastily into the bushes, crossed a low fence, and struck straight through the wood in the direction of Mount Joy. There was no pathway through this unfrequented wood, and when Rose had walked some distance, she lost the "bearings," as sailors say, and had wandered out of her direct course. She paused on a slightly elevated and open space, and looked around. The first object that arrested her attention was something red-gorgeously red and vividgleaming out from a neighboring thicket like a blazing jewel. It must be a flower, of course-though not even the superb cardinal flower had ever seemed to the girl's eyes half so splendid in its gorgeous hue. And when she reached it, she stood in almost rapturous surprise and delight at recognizing in this jewel of the woodland a dahlia-and such a dahlia !

There were several buds already nearly opened, though but one in full blossoma blossom just opened and perfectly developed.

"I will get Robert to remove it to our garden," said Rose to herself; "and this lovely blossom I will take to Mrs. Rivers. She is so fond of flowers. I wonder how it came here, away in the woods, and there is part of a basket, half buried in the earth near it. Yes, it is actually growing out of an old wicker basket."

As she passed the Mount Joy garden, Duncan was throwing over the palings a handful of rooted-up weeds. His eye was instantly caught by the glow of the flower which Rose carried in her hand, its stem wrapped in some wet moss to keep it fresh, And when she showed the blossom, and told him how she had found it, the old man's shrewd, grey eyes kindled. He knew all n an instant. It was Mrs Harmon's lost

The way in which the root had really come there was afterwards remembered by Mrs. Harmon herself. She had placed it,

with the dried moss in which it had been enveloped, not on the shelf, as she had supposed, but in a little wicker basket on that shelf, and this basket the children had the same evening appropriated for gathering gentian roots in the woods, and thus lost, with the precious dahlia roots still within it.

When, late the following day, William Watson, returning from the fair, presented himself and his \$500 at the Five Corners smithy, he was told that the place had been was not, as she well knew, the sort of sold some hours previous to Robert Ward. And every time he is under the necessity of passing that way, he beholds Robert busily at work in his shop, with plenty of customers around ; whilst Rose, prettier than ever in her youthful matronly bloom is equally as busy attending to her garden. setting roots and tying up bunches, with frequently old Duncan to criticise, instruct and assist. The old man's loan has been paid long ago, and he and the Wards are great friends. He still shows his splendid dahlia at all the flower fairs, and relates, with a chuckle, how he gained possession of it; and if any one questions the strict honorableness of the proceeding, he puts down the objective with-"Hech, sirs ! but it was a' providential, an' I'm nae ane to fly i' the face o' Providence."

A NEGRO WEDDING.

N the Lakeside for January, Egbert Phelps describes "A Southern Christmas in the Olden Time," when plantation life and old-fashioned Southern hospitality had the luxuriant aspect-on the outside -that the war and emancipation have obliterated. The writer saw one of those comical negro weddings which have been so often described. The bride and groom, answering to the names Andrew and Susie, were field hands of unmistakably pure Guinea blood, and both of them had passed the first half century of life. Their dress, however, showed that they had not yet entirely eschewed the follies of their youth, for, though rude and cheap, as became their condition, it was nevertheless not unembellished with those bits of gewgaw and glaring finery of bright-colored ribbon and tie in which the negro delights.

With the most decorus gravity the preacher began:

"Andrew, duz you lub dis yere woman ?''

'I dux so !" was the emphatic reply.

root-a dablia.

But then Mrs. Harmon would have told you what she had already repeated a hundred times, that this dahlia was a very unique and consequently precious species ; that she had purchased it in France, at a high price, one of two plants which an old disabled soldier, with a taste for flowers, had, he said, succeeded in producing by means of several successive years of careful culture and experiment ; and above all she had been certain of this dahlia taking the prize offered at the approaching great horticultural fair, for the finest and rarest specimen of flowers. Several other valuable ones she had, but this particular dahlia, "l'Imperatrice," as the old Frenchman had called it, in honor of "la belle Eugenie." This dahlia was to be the crowning glory of all. Never before had been seen a dablia of such size, of such perfect formation, and of a hue so gorgeously unique-a vivid tinge between richest carmine and most glowing crimson, tipped at the edges with imperial purple. And now the precious root was lost ; and Mrs. Senator Rivers, the other great and rich lady of the neighborhood, and Mrs. Harmon's rival in most things-Mrs. Senator Rivers would certainly obtain the prize and honor of possessing which the mistress of Fairview was so anxiously, and some people said, so foolishly ambitious.

" It must have been Duncan's fault," said Mrs. Harmon, excitedly. "He was careless with it. I cannot conceive how otherwise the root could have been lost. I remember perfectly that after myself taking it out of the jar of sand, I placed the bulb in some dry moss in a corner of the greenhouse shelf, and pointed it out to Duncan, telling him that it must be set out to-day. And now it is not to be found ! and no one but Duncan has entered the greenhouse since I left it yesterday. He has been making some arrangements there, he stys-clearing away rubbish ; and no doubt he misplaced and lost the bulb. I be careless and I suspect, lazy."

So the spring passed and the summer came blossoming into the gorgeous luxurionsness of July and August. On the first of September was to be the great horticultural fair at Lexington, the county town, about twelve miles distant from our little village.

Mrs. Senator Rivers wanted some dresses made for the little girls for this particular occasion, and, as was frequently the case, applied for Rose Lutirel's services. So one morning, about a week before the first of Rose, he hasn't any over-good will toward September, the young girl set out for a a three-mile walk to Mount Joy, whose turreted roofs and many chimneys, rising above a magnificent grove of old trees, she could see quite plainly from her own little

cottage. She was to pass the day at Mount him. Joy, and in the evening return, bringing the work with her for completion at home. Rose was used to walking, and two or three miles along the pretty picturesque valley road was very little to her. Nevertheless she accepted from farmer Brown, by whom she was presently overtaken, the offer of a ride in his wagon.

Little less than two miles from the village they came to what was called the Five Corners, a point where no less than that number of roads met. There was a nice country tavern here, together with a store and a smithy. As they passed the latter have several times lately observed him to they saw the smith come out, and with

"And such a pretty cottage-already built, you know."

"I wish I could afford to get it," he said, looking at the bright, eager face before him.

"Couldn't you try, Robert? Farmer Brown will help you, you know."

Robert came in next evening, looking rather excited. Farmer Brown had promised to loan him \$100, "all the ready money he could scrape together." This, with his own, would make \$400.

"Only \$100 more !" exclaimed Rose, joyously clasping her hands.

"But there is the difficulty, Rose. Only \$1 wanting would spoil the whole, and how on earth am I to get this \$100? I did try two or three people, whom I thought best able or willing to make the loan ; but they either haven't the money, or don't want to part with it."

"There is your cousin, William," said Rose, hesitatingly. "He has plenty."

"I spoke to him, first," said Robert, with a shadow coming into his clear blue eyes-" offering interest on the loan ; but he hadn't the money, he said. I think, me now, dear."

She understood him.

"Lot him have good or ill will," she said, with a little defiant toss of her head. "It doesn't matter. We can do without

But it was with rather a sad heart that Rose, on the last day of August, set out to Mount Joy, carrying home the completed dresses that would be wanted next day at the great fair at Lexington. She walked the whole way this time, as far as the Five Corners, and there stopped to rest in the shade of the fruit trees in front of the smith's cottage. The notice was still con-spicnously nailed in the front of the shop. "You haven't yet had an offer for your place, Mr. Simpson?" she asked of the smith, who passed her, appearing very busy.

"Plenty offers-money ain't paid down, black and brawny hands nail up a board in though. Except young Watson'll take it. Harmon wull open her big black eyne when healthy people live longer in pairs.

dahlia.

"I'll gie you a gude price for the plant, Miss Rose," he replied, persuasively.

"What price ?" asked Rose, wonderingly; for it had not occurred to her that any one would wish to buy the flower.

"A weel," said the old man, reflectively, as he scratched his head-"say \$1."

Duncan was a Scotchman, shrewd and economical, yet he felt half ashamed to impose on the girl with such an offer for this rare and splendid plant. And seeing that she hesitated, he fancied she knew something of its value.

" You think its worth mair, mayhaps?" he suggested.

"Oh, no," said Rose, with a half-absent smile; "I was only wishing it was worth \$100."

"Eb, gude guide us ! \$100 for a wee flower !"

So Rose, in defending herself from the charge of such unheard-of mercenariouness unconsciously told her story. Duncan had a good heart-"au fond" as the French say-and his sympathies were aroused for the lovers, whilst at the same time, his indignation rose against his succesor at Fairview-Watson.

"I'll tell ye wha' tis, Miss Rose," he broke in at the end of her story-"Gin ye'll gie me that flower, and hail plant root, bud an' a', I'll nae see ye put out for want o' \$100. I has that, an' mair, i' the same bank wi' that donnie chief yonder, and I'll be before handed wi' him, or my name's nae Duncan ?"

So the bargain was agreed to on the spot; and the old Scotchman, with spade and basket, accompanied Rose back to the place where grew the dah lia, and carefully, as though he were digging up a buried treasure, removed the plant with the earth undisturbed about its roots.

"Hech, sirs !" said he, with a chuckle, "but it's the leddy o' Mount Joy wull win the prize this time; an' I'd gie anither hindred dollars a'maist to see how Madame

"Will you promise to stick close to her from time an' 'tarnity, renouncin'all odders an'cleabin' on'y to her for eber an' amen !" "I will dat !"

"Will you lub, honor an' 'bey"-

"Hold on, dar, Ole Jack !"-here interrupted the groom, with no little show of indignation-"Taint no use talkin' to dis nigger 'beyin' de wimmin. Can't promise to 'bey no wimmin folks, on'y 'cept ole missis! "

"Silence dar! you owdumptious nigger," roared the wrathful preacher ; "what fur you go fur spile de ceremony? You done spilt all de grabbity ob de 'casion ! Dis yere's on'y matter ob form an' in'spensable to de 'casion, now don't you go fur to open your black mouf till de time for you to speak !"

"Will you promise to lub, honor an' bey"-Andrew still shaking his head ominously at the obnoxious word-"dis yere nigger Susie, furnishin' her wid all things needful for her comfort an' happiness, cherishin' an' makin', smoove de path ob all her precedin' days to come ?"

"I s'pose I must say yes to dat," said Andrew, meekly.

"Den I pronounce dese yere two couples to be man and wife ! an' whom de Lord hab joined togedder let no man go fur to put dem assunder !"

Here an uproar arose among the blacks, betokening a dilemma entirely unforseen by Old Jack. For inasmuch as he had forgotten to require the usual yows of Susy they insisted that, however firmly Andrew might be bound by the bonds of matrimony. Susie was still single, and the pair were but half married. The matter was at last adjusted by the preacher commencing the ceremony denozo, by which means the couple were finally united to the satisfaction of all.

237" Bickly people, it is said, live longer single than they would if married, and