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NEARING THE SHORE.

An old man sits in a worn arm-chair, White as snow is his thin, soft hair, Furrowed his cheek by time and care, And back and forth it sways.

There's a far-away from his dim, dim eye Which tells of thoughts of the long gone by, For he sits once more 'neath a cloudless sky, And in childhood merrily plays.

He rests his cheek on the head of his cane, And, happily smiling, dreams over again Of that kome, the brook, the meadow, the lan

Dreams all with a vision clear. Then childhood yields unto manhood's place And he looks once more in his bright, bright face,

And down in the starry eyes he can trace A love remembered and dear.

Then he wakes and sighs; "It seems but dream

That comes to me now like a golden gleam Or the shimmering glow of the sun's last beam.

But 'tis pleasant to think it o'er ; That youth was so sweet, but now its past, Those days of love were too precious to last, But over yonder their pleasures are cast, And I am nearing that shore."

He is gliding on in his little boat; O'er the calm, still water they peacefully float, But echo full soft brings a well known note

From the land he has left behind. But time will row back for him no more, And he gazes away to that other shore, And knows when the voyage of life shall be o'er That his dream beyond he will find.

The seeds of youth which in youth we sow, Adown through the aisles of the future will glow And shed on age a beautiful glow,

As they come in memory's gleam. Loved faces will come to dimming sight; Sweet words will echo in day dreams bright, And circle old age with their halos of light, As they mingle in beautiful dreams.

THE SQUIRE'S SON-IN-LAW

66 FF YOU don't work lively, Hester, you won't make your ten knots today."

Hester stopped short in her work, and the buzzing of the big wheel ceased. There was a mass of soft rolls, and the brown reel by her side, with the results of her morning labors in blue stocking-yarn. She held the wheel firm in one hand, and in the other a long slender thread attached to the spindle.

"Well, mother," said she, quietly turning her face toward the window, "I suppose the sun will rise and set just the same if I don't spin my ten knots a-day."

"I s'pose it will," said Mrs. Preston. She was a spare old lady, and sitting with her back bent to the shape of the rockingchair hooped over. Her sharp elbows struck out, and her rather large and coarse shoes projected beyond the skirt of her gown. "You know your father likes to see things moving indoors and out," she went on, holding her knitting needles suspended. "He hates lazy folks like Canada thistles."

"And I hate to be driven as if I was a pack-horse," retorted Hester, almost hitterly. "I tell you, mother, I won't wear my life out digging and drudging as you have yours."

"La, Hester, how you do talk. I never thought I was brought into the world for nothing but to cook three meals of victuals a day, and to 'tend to the dairy work. Now, you make a fuss because you have a little chore of stocking-yarn to spin; but it ain't so many years since I made all the cloth for the family wear, and did every stitch of my own sewing at night. Why, that year your father was sent up to the Legislature I made him a set of says a man must leave father and mother

gone to bed, with my foot on the cradle. Sylvester was a baby then, and a dreadful hectoring child. Every day I wove a full stent on linsey wolsey, for it was almost impossible to hire help; and I got up regular at five in the morning and milked four cows before I went about breakfast."

"What is the use of having a soul if gon've got to slave in that way ?" said Hester, as she gave a little sharp jerk, and broke her thread. "You might as well be a machine and done with it."

"I don't expect you'll do as I have done," responded the old lady with a sigh. "Folks shirk now-a-days to beat all. Your father, when he was younger, was a dreadful driving man. Folks must keep doing as long as they could stand; and none of his boys now can begin to do a day's work equal to his'n. I don't s'pose you mean to follow your sister Nancy, either, for she has had a pretty hard row; but I tell you what, Hester, you'll have to run off more than ten knots of stockingyarn a day if you marry Joel Selfridge, for he hain't got a mite of ambition. He makes me think of my old speckled hen setting out there on chany eggs. I should not be a mite surprised to hear Joel begin to cackle; and I don't see where he gets his shiftlessness from, for there's the Jedge, his brother, a reg'ler money catcher, smooth, and plausible, and ily, but with his eye always out for business. I s'pose Hester, you've 'bout made up your mind to take Joel, for you don't seem to favor any other young man, and he's been coming here stiddy for the last year. Your father says it costs him four quarts of oats, and two or three good square meals every week, and he talks about sending a bill for board and horse feed into the Jedge. You know he will never give his consent, and I tell you again, Hester, if you mean to marry Joel Selfridge, you and work had better not fall out."

"Mother," said Hester, with a troubled face, leaving her wheel, and going over by the hearth, "you do Joel injustice. It is father's opposition that makes him neglect his business, and takes the spirit out of him. If he could marry me he would become another man."

"Hester," said the old lady, emphasizing her words with her kultting-needles, 'what's bred in the bone will come out in the flesh. You can't make the whistle out of a pig's tail."

"There's good stuff in Joel," cried Hester, her color rising, and eyes flashing. "If the whole world was against him I'd stand true. Folks may say what they have a mind to, but give Joel a chance, and he will show that he can support a mily, and be a man among men

"Hity, tity!" retorted the old lady, incredulously. "Hain't the Jedge boosted him, and kep' a boosting of him, and now he's sot him up in the drug business, and every few days he locks the shop and comes over here a courting, and Bassett gets all his custom. I tell you, Hester, when I was your age I wouldn't have looked at a young man that fooled around when he ought to have been to work. Love is a good thing in its place, when it's got a house and garden spot free of incumbrance, and plenty of firewood, and a full meal chist and flour barrel attached to it, but it never was meant to go alone."

Hester hung her head. Her mother had the good hard sense on her side, and she had only the faith of love to offset it. She did not say what she thought, that the chance Joel needed was herself; but she leaned against the chair, and touched her mother's gray head, and her voice was

pleading and eager. "O, mother," said she, "don't you go against me. I shall never come back begging to the old door, but when I leave bome I want to have all things pleasant, and not give the neighbors a chance to talk. Mother"-and suddenly the girl threw her arms around the wrinkled neck -"you can think how it was when you were young: how your heart beat, and your cheek flushed for just one man. You wanted to go to the world's end with him, and not with another. If you saw his faults, you could forgive them, for your heart-strings were someway twisted and tied with his, and could not be undone. In those days, mother, you didn't think so much about the potato-bin and flour barrel."

"La, child, you go on to beat all," returned the old lady, drawing the back of her hand across her eyes. "The Bible twelve fine shirts. He was perty pertick- and cleave unto his wife, and I s'pose it's the gray was munching outs in state. pulling off his heavy boots, held erler in them days; and I did all the the same with a woman; but I tell you The old Squire saw Hester do this high- lug-clad feet to the genial blaze.

stitching after the rest of the folks had Hester, it's mighty handy to have worldly goods to cleave on to besides. I always agree with your father on all p'ints. He expects it of me; and if he should say black was white, laws, I should say so, too, but I think jest as I've a mind tu inside. I always said no man should tgranize over me. A woman can squint round a corner handier than a man can, and she can find ways of getting her will, and I guess I've ruled the roost as much as the Old Square has after all's said and done; but he don't know, and I wouldn' have him find it out for the world. I don't say I shall enkerridge Joel, but if you only make up your mind there's no use argufying, for yon're a reg'ler born Preston, and they all hold on like a dog to a root. I shall try to ease off things; that's all I can promise, but 1 must confess, Joel is a pleasant creetur, and you can't help liking him if you should

Heater kissed the old lady's wrinkled cheek rather more impulsively than was necessary, and then, in a half-coaxing shamed-faced sort of way, she said :

"Mother, I expect Joel over this afternoon, and I thought if you didn't mind I'd yut a little handful of fire in the sittingroom stove."

"No, you'd better not," said Mrs. Preston, decidedly. "Your father won't like to have any underhand courting going on. It will only rile him the more. He and I did all our courting business up by the kitchen fire. Mother thought it was economical. Every Sunday night he came like clock-work (we used to keep Saturday night in them days,) and there he sot and cored apples, and I strung um, and we killed two birds with one stone as neat as any thing you ever saw. Joel had better be treated in an every-day sort of fashion. In your father's present state of mind it won't do to waste candle-light and firewood on him. And, Hester, you had better stir up some fritters for supper." The Square is fond of fritters. I hain't lived with him all these years without finding out that a good meal of victuals makes considerable difference with his feelings."

Hester knew her mother was wise in her day and generation-an experienced woman; so she set her wheel away and went up to her chamber-a little, cold, neat room with slooping wall.

Joel came driving to the gate. The air was nipping, and spiteful gusts of wind whirled along the valley. He fastened his horse to the fence, and blanketed him carefully. The boys, Hester's brothers, had gone with lumber to the village mill, and would not be back until late, if at all, that night. The Squire was in the barn, tinkering away at his sap buckets. The cold weather had kept back the sugar season, but a thaw might be looked for now at any moment. The old man was short and stocky, with an eagle face, and irongray hair. All his motions were brisk, and his words exploded something after the fashion of fire-crackers. Now a grim sort of smile puckered the old face, as he thought that long-tailed gray of Herrick's, the livery-stable keeper, might stand there in the cold till doom's day for all him. Then rub-a-dub-dub on the sap buckets. Hester met Joel at the door demurely enough. He was good-looking, tall, and slender, and unconsciously elegant and refined in appearance. The young man drew up to the fire with his overcost on, and Mrs. Preston engaged him in talk about the weather and the neighbors. The kitchen was large and light, with a floor unstained, and braided mats, and comfortable chairs, and a great clock ticking in the corner. There were pots of petunias and "hen and chickens" in the window. The bit of greenery made a pretty back ground for Hester, who, seated in a low chair, took out her company work, some old-fashioned lace she was knitting, which uncoiled and foamed over her black silk apron. She was anxious as she glanced out at Joel's horse, shivering under his blanket, when the cold did not sting him unto positive uneasiness. The young man still sat with his overcoat on, fingering his hat and muffler, while Mrs. Preston talked away about Sally Miffiin's cough, and how the Selkirk children land all come down with the measles. Hester saw how uncomfortable Joel was, not knowing whether to stay or go, so sho ran out with a shawl over her head, set the long-tailed gray free from the shafts as quietly as possible, and led him into the barn. She knew all the ins and outs of horse tackle, and could harness and unharness as handily as a man. It was not long, therefore, before the gray was munching oats in state.

handed thing under his very nose, so to speak, and the strokes on the sap buckets grew more savage than ever. When the girl went back into the house she was much relieved by hearing her mother say :

"I guess the Squire has put up your horse, Joel, and you had better stay to supper, and spend the night with us."

Hester had spread the tea-table, not with the best napery and dishes from the keeping-room cupboard, for her mother had hinted that it would be impolitic to make any change on Joel's account; but everything was clean, wholesome, and appetizing. There was the platter of sliced meat, the snowy bread, and golden butter, and the dish of clear honey for the fritters .-The old man came in, and gave a sort of snort when he detected Joel sitting snugly ensconsed in a warm corner by the fire .-He drew his chair directly to the suppertable, without reference to anybody present, and his shaggy gray eyebrows met in a twisted frown-always a most decided storm signal. With something which emanated from his throat between a grunt and growl, he pushed the various dishes toward the unwelcome lover. It is a mild statement to say that Joel was literally on pins and needles. Hester's face was very red, but she maintained herself bravely by the frying kettle, and in a few minutes slipped a fritter, brown, puffy, hot, with little sprangles and crisp bits clinging to its edges, on to the old gentleman's plate. His face relaxed slightly, and a sort of juiciness crept into the dry wrinkles about his mouth. Presently two more delectable brown puffs took the place of the one that had alrealy vanished, and the molified look stole up to the knobby old nose, and higher still to the keen gray eyes, and softly united the twisted knot of the eyebrows.

"Wal, Joel, how's the Jedge?" in a pacific growl.

Joel almost sprang off his seat, the question was so sudden and startling.

"O, the Judge; he is well," stammered the young man, turning several shades red

in quick succession. "Making money hand over fist, I'll war-

rant." "Yes, he is doing pretty well," replied Joel, so painfully confused that he dropped a lump of salt into his tea in place of su-

"Them lawyers have got long heads, and sharp claws," said the Squire. "The best way is to give 'em a wide berth .-There's an old saying I used to hear when was a boy; tell the truth and shame the devil; but I guess the devil don't often get shamed that way by the lawyers. There's one thing I will say for the Jedge, though ; he's the likeliest of the lot, and he freezes ight song to his business; but that ain't a family trait, is it?"

"What, honesty ?" returned Joel; "O, yes, I never knew a dishonest Selfridge."

"Humph," grunted the old Squire, "did you ever know a shiftless Selfridge? But there ain't no use asking questions. Everything has got a new-fangled name. What are lazy folks called now-a-days, Hester? You have taught school and ought to be acquainted with fashionable names."

"I'm sure I don't know," said Hester, bending her head down over the fire.

"Now I recollect. They're called gendemen of leisure. If the Jedge can afford to keep his relations without work, why it's a mighty fine thing for them, and I don't know as it's any business of mine,' and with a metallic sound in the chest, which might have been either a laugh or a chronic cough, the old man arose from the table, set his hat determinedly upon his head, and went away out of the house to do his evening chores.

The lamp was lit, the fire well trimmed and bright. Hester brought forth a large pan of rosy-cheeked apples (Baldwins) to pare for the last batch of mince ples. The keen knife glanced and shone, and pretty red rings slid down from her comely hands. Mrs. Preston was at work on a long gray sock, a sock anybody might know belonged to the Squire if they had seen it in China. Joel had taken from his pocket the joints of his flute, and was screwing them tightly together, and as the old man opened the door he heard his dame

"Come, now, Joel, give us General Greene's March, or Yankee Doodle .-There's the Squire coming in, and he's fond of music, too."

"You can't eat it or drink it," growled the Squire, as he took his own particular arm-chair, and drew it up to the fire, and, pulling off his heavy boots, held his stock-

"But your ears can drink it," responded the old lady, not knowing she had made a pretty speech.

Joel played one old sir after another, and the walls echoed the strains pleasantly which seemed trying to bring the different heart-beats there under the roof-tree into consonauce and harmony. When the music ended, the old man, who had been pondering with his chin sunk in his stock, drew back a little, and laid his hand rather heavily upon the table, and said, breaking out suddenly :

"I s'pose the up-shot of the business is, young man, you want to marry my girl .-You've kep' running here pretty nigh a year and a half, and the matter must end some time or other. Tain't my fashion to daub much with untempered mortar, and I tell you plainly what I've got against you is your want of stiddiness and propensity to fool away your time, and live on other folks. I don't propose to support no son-in-law with my hard earnings .-Everybody around me must use his own hands and feet, and put in as much as he takes out. Now that's the long and the short of it, and I'm prepared to hear your views."

Joel, thus summoned, looked as if he would much rather run away, but he stood his ground and spoke with his eyes cast down, and his face slightly pale, while the Squire's shrewd, keen countenance was turned attentively toward him.

"I do want to marry your daughter," he began, "and I should have asked for your consent long ago, but I knew you were prejudiced against me, and opposed to taking me into your family. It don't seem quite fair to condemn a man before he has had a trial. Hester shall not repent if she marries me."

"Fine promises never raised a hill of potatoes, said the father sarcastically. "I know good clean timber when I see it, and I know a crooked stick. I tell you, young man, you've got to put by your fine airs and buckle down to hard work before you can earn a living for a family. I'm agin shiftlessness, tooth and nall, and always was. But, Hester, what have you got to BBY ?

Hester had held the apple she was paring suspended in her hand. The color varied in her cheeks, and now a tide of crimson swept over them. Her voice faltered, and almost broke at first, but it gathered strength and she went on, so clear and distinct, that it seemed as though the old clock in the corner even stopped to listen. "Father," said she, "I hope you won't oppose us till the last. I have tried to please you, and be a good daughter. but there comes a time when a girl must listen to her own heart. I have Joel, and so I am willing to go with him any where in the world. Whatever is against him now will all come right. We will make our way together, and what he has to bear and suffer will I bear and suffer with him. You never shall hear any complaints, father, from me. If our cupboard is empty; it won't keep you awake nights; but don't ask me to give him up. I am too much like you, father, I hold on till death."

"There it is," said the old man, in a heat, "you are obstinate, and wilful, and headstrong, and mean to have your own way if the sky falls. You'd a little rather get the consent of the old man that's clothed ye, and schooled ye, and kep' ye ever since you was born; but if you can't get it, no matter; take the bit between your teeth, and ride right over the feelings, and idees, and wishes of them that brought you into the world, and then see where you'll be."

Hester covered her face with her hands, and the hot tears began to make their way through her fingers. The old man got up, and sternly took his boots in one hand and a long tallow candle in the other, and marched away to bed without another word.

Mrs. Preston, who had been mixing emptyings in the buttery, with the door on the crack, came out, brushing the dust of flour from her apron.

"La, children," said she, "the old Squire is more dangerous when he don't say nothing, and sets in a brown study. It looks to me as if the wind was changing a few p'ints. It has been blowing northeast about long enough, and I shouldn't wonder if it got round south'ard. You see, I come from down the coast way, and there ain't much about a weather-cock and the old Squire's disposition that I don't understand."

The next morning was cold and windy, but the vernal sun sent a feeling of glad-