

# The Home Reading Circle

## A VISITOR FROM KENTUCKY.

By JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER.

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### SYNOPSIS.

Mr. and Mrs. James Pearson, natives and former residents of Wilkesburg, a small town in the hill country of Kentucky, after twenty years absence in New York where he is engaged in Mr. Pearson has established a large business, decide to pay a visit to their cousin, Tom Crockett, at Wilkesburg. They receive a cordial welcome from the bachelor, who has prospered, Crockett decides to do so, and he makes his first trip to the city, having written his cousin that he was coming. Pearson meets Crockett at the station, and takes him to the Pearsons' home far up town. They go up many pairs of stairs, and enter the Pearson's rooms, Pearson explaining that he lives on a high floor in order to obtain fresh air. Crockett eats a small supper that Mrs. Pearson has provided for him, but remains hungry, not liking to ask for more. He goes to bed in a room which seems too small for him to breathe in.

### PART III.

Mr. Crockett was awakened early in the morning by a rasping of ropes and jangling of bells. He thought at first it was fire, and leaped from the bed in alarm, striking his head against a projecting corner of the wall. But he soon decided that it was no fire. He could hear voices as if some one were shouting up a long chimney. The voices were distinct enough for him to understand many of the words that were said. There was a threat about never sending up any more meat unless the last month's bill was settled, and then a different voice was heard in exposition and entreaty. Mr. Crockett did not catch the end of the discussion.

Mr. Crockett did not sleep any more and was called to breakfast an hour later. The boys were there, small and sharp-faced like their parents. Mr. Crockett greeted them with affection for he was a warm-hearted man, but he could not say that he took to them very much. They seemed too old for their years. Jim ought to have let them stay at school longer. There was nothing as crowding a boy too much. The breakfast consisted of coffee, bread and butter, and some thin slices of bacon.

"We've grown out of that old Kentucky way of eating a big meal at breakfast," said Cousin Jim. "It's a very bad habit. Awful on the digestion. The Europeans, who know much more about the art of eating than we do, have only bread and butter and coffee or tea at breakfast. You country people suffer terribly from dyspepsia, and it's all caused by over-eating."

Mr. Crockett admitted that Cousin Jim might be right. Nevertheless, he was very hungry, when the breakfast was over. The boys said away so quickly that he did not notice their absence until they had been gone several minutes.

"I suppose you have 'em in the business with you, so they can take charge of it when you feel like retiring," hazarded Mr. Crockett.

Cousin Jim did not deny the correctness of this supposition. The breakfast being finished, it was suggested that Mr. Crockett go down to Central park and spend the morning there. His host and hostess were sorry they could not go with him, but one was compelled to look after his business, and the latter, owing to the temporary lack of servants, could not neglect her household duties. But Mr. Crockett demurred. Central park could wait. He believed he would go down with Cousin Jim and see how a big dry goods store was run.

Cousin Jim, with rather more vigor than he had shown at any time before, sought to get this notion out of Mr. Crockett's head. Business was such a commonplace thing, he said, that a mere looker-on was bound to be bored. But Mr. Crockett did not think so. He could see grass and trees every day in Kentucky as good as they had in Central park, and the dry goods store would interest him much more. He was not to be dissuaded.

They went down together on the elevated road and entered the big dry goods store in the heart of the shopping district, just as the clerks were gathering for their work. Back in the could see the high brass railing that surrounded the officers. But Cousin Jim did not go back there. He hung his hat in a niche and stationed himself like a soldier beside a table that stood in front of shelves loaded with rolls of cloth.

"Don't you go back every morning to see the other partners?" asked Mr. Crockett.

"No," said Cousin Jim, a flush coming into his salmon cheeks. "We've had some trouble with salesmen at this counter and I'm looking after it myself today. I think you had better walk around the store and see things."

Mr. Crockett took his advice and strolled up and down the aisles, wondering if New York had enough people to buy all the goods in that big building. There were many girls behind the counters, and Mr. Crockett spoke gallantly to one of them, saying that he hoped that Cousin Jim treated her well in the store.

### "Who is that?"

"Cousin Jim," she asked, in surprise. "Who is that?"

"Why, Mr. Pearson; don't you see him over there?"

"Oh, yes, he treats me all right," said the girl dryly. "We clerks don't complain of him."

By and by a large man, almost as large as Mr. Crockett, but much more pompous, approached him. He displayed so much expanse of shirt bosom, and carried himself with so much haughtiness, that Mr. Crockett concluded this must be the senior partner at least.

The large man tapped him on the shoulder and asked him if he wanted to buy anything. Mr. Crockett explained that he was a relative of Mr. Pearson, and had come to see how he managed the establishment. "Oh!" said the man, giving a rising inflection to the word. But he walked on, and presently when he passed Cousin Jim he said something to him that made his face flush again.

The store soon filled with customers, and there was such a great hurly burly that it made Mr. Crockett's head swim. He became tangled up two or three times in crowds of customers and clerks, and it seemed to him that he got in the way of everybody. He wanted air, but he would not leave the store, for the sight was interesting to him. Shrill voices of little boys and girls shrieked "Cash! Cash!" until his ears rang, and as one of the boys dashed past him he caught a glimpse of the face of Cousin Jim's eldest son.

After a while he wandered back towards the counter at which he had left Cousin Jim and found him still there. But Cousin Jim was so busy that Mr. Crockett would not disturb him. Then a woman was sitting on the stool in front of the counter and Cousin Jim was showing her the roll of cloth. He had almost covered the counter with them, but she insisted on seeing more. He dragged them down from the shelves for her until the hearer rose so high that only his head showed behind it. But still she was not satisfied, and she spoke very sharply to Cousin Jim, deprecating the quality of his goods, and asking him why he showed her such stuff. Mr. Crockett wondered how Cousin Jim stood it so patiently and was rather proud of his forbearance.

"The woman looked at the goods some time longer, but she took nothing, and, expressing her dissatisfaction in blunt terms, rose up and left. Mr. Crockett was about to ask Cousin Jim if all the women in New York were like that, but he saw the large man with expansive shirt bosom approaching and he held back.

"Why did you not sell her some goods?" asked the large man, angrily of Cousin Jim. "You should never let anyone who comes to your counter go away without making a purchase."

"But we did not have anything that she wanted," said Cousin Jim, deprecatingly.

"Then you should have sold her something that she didn't want," said the man, with increasing temper.

He said other things in a lower tone than Mr. Crockett didn't catch, and when he turned away Cousin Jim's countenance was very downcast. Mr. Crockett watched him for a moment or two and then drew near.

"I heard what that man said to you," he said. "Down in my part of Kentucky if a man talks to me that way I'd draw a gun on him."

And Mr. Crockett's hand felt significantly on his hip pocket.

pass her on to Easton. He was a little skeptical and questioned her closely. "She said she had paid her fare on the train all the time, and the receiver asked her why she hadn't bought a ticket," Charleston. She said she had. "Where is it?" asked the receiver. "Here it is," she replied, untying another corner of her handkerchief. There it was sure enough, good for all the way from Charleston to Easton, and hadn't been purchased once. The ticket was redeemed and there were quite a few dollars left after the girl had bought a ticket for Easton."

### HORSES WEAR SNOWSHOES.

Only Way They Can Travel Over Twenty Feet of Snow.

All the horses working at the placer mine under the shadow of Pilot Peak, Plumas county, California, wear snowshoes. The altitude of the place is about 5,000 feet and enormous quantities of snow fall there in the winter, not infrequently reaching to the depth of twenty feet.

"To overcome the disadvantages of the snow and enable us to carry on our projects there," said Mr. Bowman, one of the owners of the snowshoes, "we use shoes on the horses. By doing this we are able to get in our supplies of groceries, meats, canned goods and other things, and to transport the product of our mines. All our picks, shovels, giant powder and similar things that have to be taken about in the winter are handled in this way."

"Only California bred horses are used. It has been found these are the best, and, if possible, we get mountain horses—those that are raised at high altitudes. The horses go right along in the snow. They usually take a fast walk, but sometimes trot a little."

"They get so accustomed to the snowshoes that they don't stumble or fall at all, and they like them so well that they don't like to walk without them. They will put up their feet to have the snowshoes put on."

"We used wooden shoes at first and they worked very well, but now we have something a great deal better, it consists of a thin steel plate eight inches in diameter, through which are bored the holes of the ordinary shoe. The plate is fastened by a steel spring to the lower part of the hoof, and there is a nut on it so it can be screwed up tight with a wrench."

"On the bottom of this steel plate is a coating of India rubber, and this, by the way, is a great improvement in horse snowshoes. It keeps the shoe free entirely of snow, whereas formerly snow used to get under and fill up the plate. This would cause the horse to slip and founder around. Even when the horses are tired out with snowshoes for the first time they rarely fall, and, after a few days, they usually steady a little. If they get the bang of things, we are careful not to select nervous horses. We don't want a high miler at the mill."

"We rather prefer those that are quiet and not easily perturbed. The trained snowshoe horse goes anywhere, to mangle the wool on the mountains, or, now how deep the snow is. We tried for awhile making snowshoes out of aluminum for the horses. The metal was light and strong for a time, but we found that the aluminum, unlike steel, would bend, so we gave up the new white metal and stuck to the old, using a thicker rubber coating for the bottom."

### WIFE OF SECRETARY GAGE.

She Was an Albany Girl—A Truly Modern Love Story.

New York Mail and Express.

Mrs. Gage was Miss Cornelia Lansing. She is native of Albany. In girlhood she was a great favorite in the provincial society of which she was a part until she married a young man of the belle of the vicinage. Her acquaintance with her present husband began while his brother was a suitor for her hand. This brother, Edward C. Gage, was a fine fellow of frail physique. When she was prevailed upon to be his wife, she accepted him with the full knowledge that the marriage would not be a happy one.

Years of self-sacrificing devotion to an invalid, when the inevitable came there grew up between Lyman J. Gage and his brother's widow, a friendship, which quickly ripened into tender affection. Mr. Gage, however, was engaged in business, and himself a widower, never thought of marrying again. It was not until he found himself helpless as the result of an accident, and was obliged to take a vacation for convalescence, that the story of the romance with a woman with modern improvements. They were betrothed by telegraph. Mrs. Lloyd C. Gage was in San Francisco. Lyman J. Gage was in Florida nursing his bruises. They had been in correspondence ever since the brother's death, but there had been little exchange of sentiment until one day, when she received a letter from him saying that after mature deliberation he had come to the conclusion that she was the woman to whom he wished to be married.

When he received the letter from her, he would agree with him. If she did he begged her to complete his happiness by writing the word "Yes." If she did not, she need not say anything at all in reply. When the reply came Mr. Gage was in Thomasville, Ga., on his way north with the remains of his friend, George C. Clarke. The reply was "Yes," and nothing more. Thereupon Mr. Gage wired his affianced to meet him in Denver, where the ceremony would be performed at the home of a relative. They met in the mountain city and the ceremony was carried out according to the telegraphed programme. The marriage was a romance in every respect. Mrs. Gage and her husband have passed hardly a day away from each other. When he was ill at the Holland House in New York a few years ago, and underwent an operation for appendicitis, they were separated for the first time, but she was telegraphed for at once and nursed him to convalescence. In 1892 they took a trip to Europe and the Orient together. At church, at the theater, at card parties and everywhere else, they seem inseparable. They have no children, but Mr. Gage by his first wife has a son, now grown and married.

### Day Dreams.

O sweet beneath this tree to lie  
And watch within my eye  
The broken glimpses of the sky,  
And where the sunlight through the  
leaves  
A subtle flickering broodery weaves.  
To hear the low eternal sigh  
Of happy winds in tree-tops high,  
Or gnats hung in a waxy cloud  
Now far and faint, now near and loud,  
Or bees that quickly come and go  
On noisy errands to and fro;  
To see the swallows far, far up,  
Like mice in heaven's azure cup;  
To lounge and lie with dreamy eye,  
And feel the world go whirling by,  
And half asleep in slumber sound  
Of winds that shake the tree-tops high,  
—Fall Mail Gazette.

## TEN BEST SHORT POEMS BY ENGLISHMEN.

A Selection Made by Richard Henry Stoddard.

To Lucretia on Going to the War.  
Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,  
That from the nursery  
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind  
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,  
The first love in the field;  
And with a stranger faith embrace  
A sword, a horse, a shield.  
Yet the inconstancy is such  
As you, too, shall allow;  
I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honor more.

Death's Final Conquest.  
The glories of our blood and state,  
Are shadows not substantial things;  
There is no armour against fate;  
Death lays his icy hand on kings—  
Scurvy and crown,  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made,  
With the poor creaked ayne and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,  
And gain their crowns and sceptres, yet  
The heart of man is his own field;  
The soldier's sword his own will kill;  
Their stronger naves at last must yield.

They tame but one another still;  
Unconquered, they abide;  
How soon they stoop to fate,  
And how soon to his mercies yield.  
When they shall see pale captives creep  
To the feet of yond victorious child.

The heralds with their trumpets blown,  
Then sound no more your mighty deeds;  
Upon dead's purple altar, now,  
See where the victor victim bleeds!  
All heads must come,  
To the cold tomb:  
Only the sainted warrior's dust,  
Small sweet and blisssom in the dust,  
—James Shirley.

How Sleep the Brave.  
How sleep the brave who sink to rest  
By all our country's wishes blest!  
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,  
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,  
She there shall dress a sweeter sod  
Than flowers that aches her eye to tread.

By fairy voices their knell is rung  
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;  
Their sterner comes, a pilgrim gray,  
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;  
And freedom shall while repair,  
To dwell a weeping hermit there,  
—William Collins.

Mary Morrison.  
Oh, Mary, at thy window here,  
It is the wished, the trusted hour!  
Thine smiles and glances let me see,  
That make the miser's treasure pure;  
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,  
A heavy slave free sun to sun,  
Could I thee rich reward let me see,  
The lovely Mary Morrison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string,  
The music of the spheres was sung,  
To thee my fancy took its wing,  
I sat, but neither heard nor saw,  
Though this was fair, and that was braw,  
—San Francisco Call.

Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,  
Who for thy sake would gladly die?  
Or canst thou break that heart of his,  
Which loves to live in loving thee?  
If love for love thou wilt not part,  
At least be pity to me shown;  
A thought ungentle cannot be,  
The thought of Mary Morrison.

Oh, turn again, fair Inez!  
Before the fall of night,  
For fear the moon should shine alone,  
And stars untraced bright.  
Thou wast my love, and I was thine,  
—Robert Burns.

I saw you not fair Inez?  
She's gone into the West,  
To dance when the sun is down,  
And rob the world of rest.  
She took our daylight with her,  
When only fault is loving thee;  
And breathes the love against thy cheek,  
I dare not even write!

Would it had been, fair Inez,  
That gallant cavalier,  
Who rode so gallly by thy side  
When whistles on her face;  
Were there no loving dames at home,  
Or no true lovers here,  
Thou shouldst have won the sea to win  
The dearest of the dear?

I saw, thee, lovely Inez,  
To descend along the shore,  
With a band of noble gentlemen,  
And banners waved before,  
And gentle youths and maidens gay—  
—Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Alas, alas, fair Inez!  
She went away with song,  
With music waiting on her steps,  
And soundings of the throng,  
And some were sad, and felt no mirth,  
But only music's wrong.  
In sounds that sang farewell, farewell,  
To hear you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Inez!  
That vessel never bore  
So fair a lady on its decks,  
Nor danced so light before,  
Atlas, for pleasure on the sea,  
And sorrow on the shore,  
The smile that blest one lover's heart  
Has broken many more.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci.  
O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,  
So fat and blundering?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest done.

I see a lily on thy brow,  
With anguish moist and fever dew,  
And on thy cheeks a fading rose  
Past wethering too.

I met a lady in the meads,  
Full beautiful—a fairy's child,  
Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
And her eyes were wild.

I made a parlour for her head,  
And bracelets, too, and fragrant zone;  
She look'd at me as she did love,  
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,  
And there she went with sigh'd full day long,  
For side-long would she bend, and sing  
A fairy's song.

She found me roots and relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said—  
"I love thee true!"

She took me to her elfin grot,  
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore,  
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes,  
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,  
And there I dream'd—ah! woe betide!  
The latest dream I ever dream'd,  
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;  
They cried, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci  
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom,  
With horrid warning glances wide,  
And I woke and found me here,  
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,  
Alone and palely loitering;  
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

I arise from dreams of thee,  
In the first sweet sleep of night,  
When the winds are breathing low,  
And the stars are shining bright;  
I arise from dreams of thee,  
In the soft dawn of the morning sun;  
To thy chamber window, sweet!  
Has led me—who knows how?

The wandering airs that faint  
On the chime, the silent stream—  
The champak odors fall,  
Like sweet thoughts in a dream.  
The nightingale's complaint,  
It dies upon her heart,  
As I must die on thine  
O beloved as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!  
I die, I faint, I fall,  
Let the love in kisses rain  
On my lips and eyelids pale!  
My cheek is cold and white, alas!  
My heart cold and fast;  
O! press it close to thine again,  
Where it will break at last.

She walks in Beauty,  
Like the night of cloudless skies;  
And all the heart of love and life,  
Meets in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus heaven to that tender light,  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade, the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent.

Abou Ben Adhem.  
Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)  
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,  
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
An angel, writing in a book of gold,  
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem  
bold,  
And the presence in the room he said,  
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised  
his head,  
And with a look made of all sweet accord,  
Answered, "The names of those who love  
the Lord."  
"And is mine one?" said Abou; "Nay, not so."  
Replied the angel, Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerily still, and said, "I pray, thee,  
Write me, as one that loves his fellow-men."

The angel wrote and vanished. The next  
light  
It came again with a great wakening  
light,  
And showed the names whom love of God  
had blessed.

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