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THE FALLOW FIELD.

The sun comes up and the sun goes down;
The night mist shroudeth the sleeping town;
But if it be dark or if it be day,
If the tempests beat or the breezes play,
Still here on this upland slope I lie
Looking up to the changeful sky.

Naught am I but a fallow field;
Never a crop my acres yield.
Over the wall at my right hand
Stately and green the corn blades stand,
And I hear at my left the flying feet
Of the winds that rustle the bending wheat.

Often while yet the morn is red
I list for our master's eager tread.
He smiles at the young corn's towering height,
He knows the wheat is a goodly sight,
But he glances not at the fallow field
Whose idle acres no wealth may yield.

Sometimes the shout of the harvesters
The sleeping pulse of my being stirs,
And as one in a dream I seem to feel
The sweep and the rush of the swinging steel,
Or I catch the sound of the gay refrain
As they heap their wains with the golden grain.

Yet, O my neighbors, be not too proud,
Though on every tongue your praise is loud.
Our mother Nature is kind to me,
And I am beloved by bird and bee,
And never a child that passes by
But turns upon me a grateful eye.

Over my head the skies are blue;
I have my share of the rain and dew;
I bask like you in the summer sun
When the long bright days pass, one by one,
And calm as yours is my sweet repose
Wrapped in the warmth of the winter snows.

For little our loving mother cares
Which the corn or the daisy bears,
Which is rich with the ripening wheat,
Which with the violet's breath is sweet,
Which is red with the clover bloom,
Or which for the wild sweet fern makes room.

Useless under the summer sky
Year after year men say I lie.
Little they know what strength of mine
I give to the trailing blackberry vine;
Little they know how the wild grape grows
Or how my life-blood flushes the rose.

Little they think of the cups I fill
For the mosses creeping under the hill;
Little they think of the feast I spread
For the wild wee creatures that must be fed:
Squirrel and butterfly, bird and bee,
And the creeping things that no eye may see.

Lord of the harvest, Thou dost know
How the summers and winters go.
Never a ship sails east or west
Laden with treasures at my behest,
Yet my being thrills to the voice of God
When I give my gold to the golden-rod.

—JULIA C. R. DORR, in *Harper's Magazine for February.*

AUTUMN BLOSSOMS.

How was it that I came to be an old bachelor? Not because of hating women, I am sure, for I liked them very much, and never could have spoken to one of them rudely or discourteously in my life. As nearly as I know it was in this wise:

My father died, leaving a family of children, a wife and an old father and mother, of whom only myself was able to earn a shilling. He had never saved anything.

So, after the first grief, when we had calmed down and were able to look matters calmly in the face, there was a wretched sort of prospect for us. I was only an accountant, and had a young fellow's way of wasting my small salary in a thousand different ways. I had been paying attention to Elsie Hall, who, young and childish as she was, had a way of leading her admirers into extravagance. Of all the trials of that never-to-be-forgotten time, I think the greatest was appearing to be niggardly in those baby-blue eyes. I did not mind wearing plain suits, discarding kid gloves and denouncing the opera; but not to lay those boquets and books, and music, and dainty bits of jewelry, and multitudinous trifles at Elsie's feet was a very terrible ordeal. I passed through; and if ever a man had reason to be thankful, I had, for the acquisitive little beauty jilted me in a month for Tom Tamden, who was rich and lavish of gifts, and who ran away from her after a marriage of ten months.

I worked night and day, and managed to keep the wolf from the door.

Sometimes I used to think how well it was for Elsie that she had not really loved me, for she could have had nothing but a dismal prospect of wearing out her youth in a dreary, hopeless engagement to one too poor to marry. That was until Tom ran off. Then I thought it would have been even better for her to have shared our humble home and poor fare, and the love I could have given her, than to be deserted so. And I pittied her, as if she had not proven herself heartless. But I never went near her, of course, and never even spoke of her to my mother.

I grew no younger all this while, and every year seemed to add five years to my looks. I had never been very handsome or very merry, and soon I became conscious of a peculiar middle-aged look, which settles down upon some people very early.

Strangers, too, began to take me for the head of the family; and once, in a new neighborhood, the butcher alluded to "my wife." I found that he meant my mother, and only wondered that it was not dear old granny.

She was eighty, grandfather ninety, and they died one bright autumn day, before prosperity came to us—died within an hour of each other, for grannie just said:

"I think I'll lie down a bit, now that Lemuel don't need need me. I'm very tired."

Then she kissed me and said:

"You've been a good boy to your grandma, Edward. You'll have that to think of."

And when we next looked upon her she was dead, with her hands upon her cheek, like a sleeping child.

So, two were gone, and we were sadder than before. And then Jean, my eldest sister, married at sixteen, a physician, who carried her off to Hindoostan in her honeymoon.

And we could, none of us, feel the wedding a happy thing;

But prosperity did come at last. I had worked hard for it, and anything a man makes his sole object in this life, he is very sure to accomplish.

We were comfortable—easy. Ah, what a word that is after years of struggle. At last we were rich. But at that time I was five-and-forty—a large, dark, middle-aged man, with a face that looked to myself in the glass, as though it were perpetually intent on figures. The girls were all married. Dick had taken to the sea, and we saw him once or so in a year; and Ashton was at home with mother and myself, the only really handsome member of our family, and just two-and-twenty. And it was on his birthday, I remember that the letter came to me from poor Hunter—that letter which began:

"When these lines reach you, I shall have my six feet of earth—all I ever owned, or would, if I had lived to be a hundred."

We had been young together, though he was really older than I, and we had been close friends once; but a roving fit had seized him, and we had not met for years. I knew he had married a young Kentish girl, and knew no more; but now he told me that she was dead, and that his death would leave a daughter an orphan.

"She is not quite penniless," he wrote, "for her mother had a little income, which, poor as I was, I was never brute enough to meddle with, and it has descended to her. But I have been a rolling stone, gathering no moss, all my life, and we never stayed long enough in one place to make friends. Will you be her guardian? It is a dying man's last request."

And the result of that letter, and another from the lawyer who had Annie Hunter's little fortune in charge, was that one soft spring day found me on board a great steamer, which lay at rest after her voyage in the protecting arms of Liverpool, with two little hands in mine, and a pair of great, brown eyes lifted to my face, and a sweet voice choked with sobs saying something of poor papa, and of how much he had spoken of me, the lonely voyage, and the green graves left behind, and I who had gone to meet a child and found a woman, looking at her and feeling toward her as I had never looked upon nor felt toward any other.

Not to Elsie Hall. It was not the boyish love dream come again.

Analyzing my emotion, I felt only a great longing to protect and comfort her—to guard her from every pain and ill, and I said to myself:

"This is as a father should feel to a daughter. I can be a parent to Geo. Hunter's child is very truth."

And I took her home to the old house and to my old mother. I thought only of them. Somehow I never thought of Ashton.

Shall I ever forget how she brightened the sombre rooms? How, as her sadness were away, she sang to us in the twilight? How strangely a something which made the return home, and the long hours of the evening, seem so much brighter than they had ever been before, stole into my life? I never went to sleep in church now. I kept awake to look at Olive Hunter—to listen to her pure contralto as she joined in the singing.

Sometimes I caught her eye—her great, unfathomable, brown eye—for she had a habit of looking at me. Was she wondering how a face could be so stern and grim? I used to ask myself.

Ashton used to look at her also. He had been away when she came to us, and when he returned she was a grand surprise to him.

"Oh, how lovely she is!" he had said to me.

"She is very handsome, Ashton," I replied.

Ashton laughed.

"May I never be an old bachelor if it brings me to calling such a girl very pretty," he said.

And I felt conscious that my cheek flushed and felt angry that he should have spoken of me thus, though I had never cared before.

They liked each other very much, those two young things. They were together a great deal. A pretty picture they made in the Venetian window in the sun set. He a fair haired, blue eyed, Saxon looking youth; she so exquisitely dark and glowing.

Every one liked her. Even my old clerk, Stephen Hadley, used to say her presence lit the office more than a dozen lamps, the nearest approach to a poetical speech of which old Stephen was ever known to be guilty.

And I never knew how much she was to me until one evening, when, coming home earlier than usual, I saw in that Venetian window where Ashton and Olive had made so many pleasant pictures for me, one that I shall never forget as long as I live.

She stood with her back to me. Ashton was kneeling at her feet. The sound of the opening door dissolved the picture, but I had seen it, and I had stolen away to hide the stab that it had given me.

I sat down in my own room and hid my face in my hands, and would have been glad to hide it beneath my coffin lid. I knew now that I loved Olive Hunter; that I loved her not as an old man might love a child, but as a young man might love the woman who ought to be his wife—better than I had loved Elsie Hall; for it was not boyish passion, but earnest, heartfelt love.

I in love! I arose and looked in the mirror, and my broad shouldered reflection flashed before my gaze.

The spring time of my life had flown and my summer had come and gone, and in the autumn I had dreamed of love's bud and blossom.

I knelt beside my bed and prayed that I might not hate my brother—that I might not even envy him. His touch upon my door startled me. He came in with something in his manner not usual to him, and sat down opposite me. For a few minutes we were silent. Then he said, speaking rapidly, and blushed like a girl:

"Ned, old fellow, you—you saw me making a fool of myself just now, I suppose?"

"I saw you on your knees," I said.

"And thought me a silly fellow, eh? But you don't know, Ned. You can't understand—you've been so calm and cool all your life through, you know. She's driving me mad, Ned. I do believe she likes me, but she won't say yes. I'd give my right hand for her love. I must have it, and I think you can help me, Ned. From something she said, I believe she thinks you would disapprove; perhaps you are one of those old fellows who want every one to marry for money. Tell her you're not, Ned, dear, old fellow—tell her you have no objection, and I'll never forget it, indeed, I won't."

"Tell her I have no objection?" I repeated, mechanically.

"You know you are master here, and as much my father as if you were really one, instead of a brother," said Ashton. "If I did not know how kindly you had always felt to us both, I should not confide in you for it is a serious thing to be in love, Ned, and you may thank heaven you know nothing of it."

"Know nothing of it?" Ah, if he could have read my heart just at that time!

"I'll do what I can, Ashton," I said at last. "I'll try my best."

And he flung his arms about me in his own boyish fashion and left me alone—alone with my own thoughts.

He had said truly, I had been a father to him. I was old enough to be hers, and no one should know my silly dream. I would hide it while I lived. As I said once:

"I've only the old folks and the children now," I said then, "I will only think of mother and Ashton. Let my own life be as nothing, I have lived for them—if needs be, I will die for them."

But I would not see or speak to Olive that night, nor till the next day was quite done. Then, in the twilight, I sat down beside her and took her hand.

"Olive," I said, "I think you know that Ashton loves you. I am sure he has told you so. And you—can you not love him?"

She drew her hand from mine and said not one word.

"I should rejoice in my brother's happiness. I should think him happier in having your love than anything else could make him," I said, "I told him I would tell you so."

And then she spoke.

"You wish me to marry Ashton?"

Reproach was in the tone—reproach and sorrow.

"If you can love him, Olive," I said.

She arose. She seemed to shrink from me, though in the dark I could not see her face.

"I do not love him," she said.

And we were still as death. Then suddenly Olive Hunter began to sob.

"You have been very kind to me. I love you all," she said, "but I cannot stay here now. Please to let me go somewhere else. I must. I cannot live here."

"Go from us, Olive?" I said, "Nay, we are not tyrants; and once assured you do not love him, Ashton will——"

"Hush!" she panted; "please let me go away! Please let me go away."

The moon was rising. Her new born light fell upon Olive's face. Perhaps its whiteness made her look pale.

She leaned against the wall with her hand upon her heart, her unfathomable eyes full of pain. How had I hurt her so? A new thought struck me.

"Perhaps you love some one else, Olive?"

And at that she turned her face from me and hid it in her hands.

"Too much—too much. You might have spared me that," she said. "Let me go away. I wish you had never brought me here."

And I rose and went to her. I bent over the woman I loved. I touched her with my hand. Her soft hair brushed my cheek.

"Olive," I said, "if coming here has brought pain upon you, I wish I had not. I would have died to make you happy."

And my voice trembled and my hand shook, and she turned her face toward me again and looked into my eyes. What she saw in mine I do not know—the truth, I think. In hers I read this:

I was not too old to her—not too old to be loved.

I stole my arm about her; she did not untwine it. I uttered her name, "Olive," huskily. Afterward I told her of my struggles with myself, not then. I said;

"Olive, I love you; but it cannot be that you care for me. I am old enough to be your father."

And again I saw in her eyes the happy truth, and took her to my heart.

But we kept our secret for a while, for we both knew that his wound was not too deep to find a balm; and within a year, when the boy brought home a bride, a pretty creature whom he loved, and who loved him, I claimed Olive.

And she is mine now; and the autumn blossoms of my heart will only fade on each to bloom again through all eternity in Paradise.

An Aggravating Little Wretch.

Some of our city stores are constantly annoyed by children coming to the door and asking for cards, empty boxes and that sort of thing. The clerks are, of course, down on the youngsters, and the warfare never ends. The other day a littel girl opened a store door, and sticking her head in, called out:

"Say, mister, have you got any empty boxes?"

"No!" said the clerk, not very politely.

"Got any cards?"

"No!"

"Got any almanacs?"

"No!"

"Got any empty bottles?"

"No!"

"Got any sense?"

"No—yes—no—yes—you miserable little wretch!" and the clerk flew out of the door; but the youngster was in the next alley making faces at him and he came back madder than he had been since his salary was reduced.

Trimming Apple Trees.

Experience is the mother of wisdom. There are different opinions among farmers about the proper time for trimming apple trees.

The main object ought to be to trim in that season of the year when the wound will entirely heal over, or the tree is ruined, sooner or later. If that object is not accomplished the water enters and a hole is rotted into the trunk.

It becomes hollow and is destroyed. Some trim early in the spring. The sap forces itself out of the wound in abundance, runs down on the body or larger limbs, the bark turns black and dies, and the tree is permanently injured.

Another follows the opposite extreme and prunes in August, or even in early winter, when the sap has turned into wood. The wound does not turn black, as in the other case, but heals slowly, if at all, and a tree with holes in it is the final result. If the bark is entirely peeled off a tree from the roots to the limbs in the longest day of midsummer, which is somewhere from the 15th to the 20th of June, a new bark is formed and the tree is not injured, and an old tree is said to be benefitted by the operation. If apple trees are pruned at this time, if any bark is accidentally taken off, new bark will form to cover the wound where the limb has been removed.

It will entirely heal over if the limb removed is not too large and the growth is sufficient for that purpose. The sap of the tree is not too thin to run out and blacken the tree, as in early spring, nor too thick and already formed into the wood, and the wound comparatively dry. Both wood and bark, as in later pruning, are not stopped in growth over the wound. Many farmers, as a general thing, prune an orchard without discretion, sawing off too large limbs that can never heal over, oftentimes cutting them off some inches from the trunk of the tree or the larger limb from which they are removed, the stub of the limb will die to the body and the further decay of the tree is sure.

In pruning off too much the natural equilibrium between the roots and the top is destroyed and the body of the tree will come out in suckers and sprouts.

Such ignorant pruners had better cut their trees down and trim them afterward, which is easier done and with more profit to themselves, as the ground could be employed for some better purpose.

If a limb is dead there is no option; it must be cut off close to the tree. The only living limbs that should be cut off are the small ones that will heal over, coming from the larger branches in the inside of the top, and those that cross and gall each other, thereby letting in more sun to the apples to give them a better color and give the pickers a better chance in the tree. Everything beyond this is superfluous, and pruning had better be dispensed with altogether. Many orchards receive their death warrants from such ill pruning every year.

How Slate Pencils are Made.

Broken slate from the quarries is put into a mortar run by steam and pounded into small particles. Thence it goes into the hopper of a mill, which runs it into a bolting machine, such as is used in flouring mills, where it is bolted, the fine, almost impalpable flour that results being taken into a mixing tub, where a small quantity of steatite flour manufactured in a similar manner is added, and the whole made into a stiff dough. The dough is thoroughly kneeded by passing it several times between iron rollers. Thence it is carried to a table, where it is made into charges—that is, short cylinders, four or five inches thick, and containing from eight to ten pounds each. Four of these are placed in a strong iron chamber or retort, with a changeable nozzle, so as to regulate the size of the pencils, and subjected to tremendous hydraulic pressure, under which the composition is pushed through the nozzle in a long cord like a slender snake sliding out of a hole, and passes over a sloping table slit at right angles with the cords to give passage, with a knife which cuts them into lengths. They are then laid on boards to dry, and after a few hours are removed to sheets of corrugated zinc, the corrugations serving to prevent the pencils from warping during the process of baking, to which they are next subjected in a kiln, into which superheated steam is introduced into pipes; the temperature being regulated according to the requirements of the articles exposed to its influence. From the kiln the articles go into the finishing and packing room, where the ends are thrust for a second under rapidly revolving emery wheels, and withdrawn neatly and smoothly pointed ready for use. They are then packed in pasteboard boxes, each containing 100 pencils; and these boxes, in turn, are packed for shipment in wooden boxes containing 100 each, or 10,000 pencils in a shipping box. Nearly all the work is done by boys, and the cost therefore is light.

ASHBURNHAM, Mass., Jan. 14, '80.

I have been very sick over two years. They all gave me up as past cure. I tried the most skillful physicians, but they did not reach the worst part. The lungs and heart would fill up every night and distress me, and my throat was very bad. I told my children I never should die in peace until I had tried Hop Bitters. I have taken two bottles. They have helped me very much indeed. I am now well. There was a lot of sick folks here who have seen how they helped me, and they use them and are cured, and feel as thankful as I do that there is so valuable a medicine made.

MRS. JULIA G. CUSHING.

Remember to underdrain orchards that are on low, damp land. Such orchards cannot be productive without it.

Imitate the industry of the ant and the frugality of the bee.

Don't Betray Confidence.

Treachery is a detestable fault, therefore let nothing tempt you to betray a secret confided to your honor. What if the friend who once trusted you, and told you all the secrets of his heart, has become your enemy? You are still bound to keep your word inviolate, and preserve locked in your heart the secrets confidently made known to you. A man of principle will never betray an enemy. He holds it a christian duty never to reveal what in good faith was placed in his keeping. While the Albanians were at war with Philip, the King of Macedon, they intercepted a letter that the king had written to his wife Olympia. It was returned unopened, that it might not be read in public—their laws forbidding them to reveal a secret. Among the Egyptians it was a criminal offence to divulge a secret. A priest who had been guilty of the offence, was ordered to leave the country.

Have you another's secret in your keeping? Then reveal it not for the world. A confiding friend may tell you a hundred things, which if it was whispered abroad would bring him into contempt and ridicule, and injure his character through life. No one is so upright that he may not have committed some ungentlemanly act, or some impure offence, which may have been done years ago, before the individual's character was formed, and before he had wife and children. Would it not be a profanation of the most sacred duties in a fit of anger, or out of malice or revenge, to divulge a secret like this? A man's enemies would not care whether it was the fault of his thoughtless youth or his maturer years so long as they could make a handle of it to his injury, and thus effect their purpose. Be careful, then, never under any consideration, whatever, to repeat what has been whispered to you in the confidence of friendship. A betrayer of secrets is fit for the society of the low and vile.

The Stinging Tree.

The stinging tree of Queenland is a luxurious shrub, pleasant to the eye but dangerous to the touch. It grows from two or three inches to ten or fifteen feet in height, and emits a disagreeable odor. Says a traveler:

"Sometimes while shooting turkeys in the shrubs, I have entirely forgotten the stinging tree till I was warned of its close proximity by its smell, and have often found myself in a little forest of them. I was only once stung by them, and then very lightly. Its effects are curious; it leaves no mark, but the pain is maddening, and for months afterward the part when touched is tender in rainy weather, or when it gets wet by washing, etc. I have seen a man who treats ordinary pain lightly, roll on the ground in agony after being stung, and I have known a horse so completely mad after getting into a grove of the trees that he rushed open mouthed at every one who approached him, and had to be shot. Dogs, when stung, will rush about whining piteously, biting pieces from the affected part."

It Waked up the Prayer Meeting.

A lady of Staunton, Va., called at a watchmaker's shop last Thursday afternoon to get her alarm clock, which had been undergoing repairs, and when the alarm had been carefully set for 5:30 o'clock, started for home. On the way, finding that she was just in time for the prayer meeting of the First Presbyterian church, she entered and sat down among the devout. Now, when she ordered the alarm set at 5:30, she had morning in her mind, but the repairer had afternoon in his his, while the clock was intent only on doing its duty, and ran on silently toward a relentless fate. The prayer meeting had reached a moment of unusual solemnity, when suddenly the alarm went off with a fury born of recent repairs, and with a noise like a drunken trombone. If that clock ever has another chance to take part in a prayer meeting, it will not be during its present ownership.

Cure for the Blues.

"What's the matter now?" asked a fashionable Austin lady of her husband, who seemed to be depressed.

"I'm feeling very badly. I'm afraid I'm not long for this world," was the reply.

"Fiddle sticks."

"No! I'm in earnest. It will not be long before you will be walking te the graveyard behind my coffin."

"That's just were you're fooling yourself. I'll ride in a carriage, or else I'll not be in the procession at all."

Such heartlessness made him so mad that he went to work and chopped up a cord of wood, and now he feels strong enough to run for almost any office in the gift of the people. —*Texas Siftings.*

He is a staid church member; a Presbyterian. He had a dog. There was a wicked man who boarded at the same house. The dog was well known as the property of the good man. The wicked man fed and fondled the dog, and the dog grew much attached to him. When the wicked man walked out in the evening the dog would go along. The wicked man would go to very disreputable places and the dog would sit on the steps and wait until he came out. The dog was acquainted with all his master's acquaintances, and when any of them passed he would come down from the steps and go to them to be caressed and then return to the steps that he might not lose the wicked man who was inside. The good man has been disciplined by his church. He has sold his dog.

It is said that Barnum is negotiating for the purchase of a white elephant, and has sent an agent to Siam with $100,000 wherewith to buy one.

History is neither more nor less than biography on a large scale.

A Cup of Cold Water.

It was night at the Michigan Central Station in Detroit—late, dark, silent night; and only a few dim lights broke the gloom into dense shadows that were more fearful than utter darkness, and no traveler was so unfortunate as to be compelled to linger in the dreary place.

At least that was the impression the vast silence gave, but there were two travelers who, when no trains were coming or going, waited in the depot through the chill morning hour.

One was a man who had come by the latest train, and whom the conductor had helped into the depot, and who, through weariness, had fallen asleep on the cushion. He was ticketed through, and his destination was the grave; no one needed to glance at him twice to see that he had almost reached the end of his last journey.

The other passenger was on the road to ruin; he too, had nearly arrived at the terminus—at least his pallid, sunmarked face, and ill-assorted, ragged clothes seemed to indicate that he had nearly touched the foot of the ladder; the world had taken his measure and named him "tramp," but he had wrought his own ruin; low and evil as he was he never blamed any one but himself.

This man nad been watching the sleeper for a long time, had noted his weakness, his respectable appearance, and that he had a watch chain at his vest pocket, and a respectable satchel under his head, and he crept near, nearer, with the one horrible thought uppermost—he would rob the dying man! He had no fear of the act. He hugged the baseness of it in his soul. But he did fear that some one would come in and interrupt his project. If the man moved? Why, a turn of the wrist at