REST.

There is a little grove beside the hill
Where aspens shake and thrill,
With silver stems beneath their glimmering green
Against the pines' dark screen.
And all day long the rain unceasing weaves,
Ripples of light among their tremulous leaves,
And all day long the moss against their feet
Tufted, and starred, and sweet,
Flashes in flickering splendor with the crown
Of diamond drops swept down.

Through pillared arches of the forest aisles,
Sacred untrodden miles,
The voiceless throngs in this God's temple dim
Bow to the rain's soft hymn;
Walls on whose pile nor axe nor hammer wrought
The Master-builder's thought,
Unchiseled font and granite altar stair
Wait on the worldless prayer.
And overhead against a brooding sky
The priestly pine trees high
With lifted hands invoke on vale and crest
Infinitudes of rest.
—Mabel Earle, in the Atlantic.

Contentment.

BY S. RHETT ROMAN.

I AM CONTENTED with my lot. And I venture the assertion that very few men of my acquaintance can, with truthfulness, make a similar statement.

To be satisfied with what one has whether a bread-and-cheese existence or one in which truffles abound, is the essence of philosophy, the height of wisdom, and the only basis of contentment.

Well, I flatter myself I have reached that sublime pinnacle of perfect satisfaction, with conditions, as fate and my own determined efforts have made them, and no outside element can henceforth disturb them or me.

The time was when the ardor and impetuosities of youth led me into snares and pitfalls in plenty, when ambitions beckoned and I followed, and when, like Marc Antony, I believed the world could well be lost for the slow smile of certain lips and the glance of eyes as deeply blue, as fathomless and mysterious as some land-locked mountain lake.

That was ages ago. Like other men, I had my lesson to learn, and I found it repulsively hard.

But now, I know it, and know it thoroughly. There are no surprises ahead of me, where men and women are concerned. I can afford to smile over the crudities and absurdities of the time when I had enthusiasms and a belief in worth, goodness, disinterestedness and other mythical virtues, and I long since ceased envying Arthur [illegible] vanity, the woman with [illegible] once Cleopatra, the same who threw me over for a better parti, she thought, which was a miscalculation on her part, because to-day I am a very much wealthier man than Arthur, thanks to some copper mines in Colorado. Where was the harm? The aim that is for all is richest.

To [illegible] all a man [illegible]

At [illegible] I am, with [illegible] landed estate, [illegible] who were lords [illegible] and that like [illegible] by buying [illegible] and that a [illegible] feverish and [illegible] called family ties, which, [illegible] I propose to continue to [illegible]

I [illegible] down the above random [illegible] evening with a delightful appreciation of my freedom from [illegible] when a dispatch was handed me by Thomas.

Did I say a man can order his own fate and maintain it within what boundaries and on what lines his inclinations prompt?

Well, I was mistaken. It seems there is a fatality (the poets call it a Wise Providence) which takes pleasure in stepping in and ordering differently, and with diabolical malice to thrust upon you the moral obligations of an old-time friendship, compassion for the helpless and other promptings of a like nature. Still, we are a helpless puppet and must dance when the strings are pulled.

Of course, I was sorry to hear of Arthur's death.

I never had any feeling but one of contempt for his character, he was always double-faced, and a plausible young scoundrel, but we were boys together, and the very fact of my always hearing his praise and shielding him when a reckoning came to us for our various and frequent escapades, made me fond of the handsome little fellow, although God knows he was selfish and heartless enough.

I have often wondered by what torturous methods he got between Aline and me.

It was during those years when I was out in the far west seeking the fortune I found eventually in the copper [illegible] the last prayer and pain of his [illegible] and her [illegible] was over, long years afterwards I learned I had been too hasty.

Was it a trap laid for me? Perhaps Aline was also fooled. I have sometimes thought it.

Well, I forgave her, and when the news of her death came to me, the ashes of memory were but lightly stirred.

Now this telegram, followed by a letter from old Penroy, Arthur's lawyer, is far more disquieting.

I find myself the appointed guardian of a young girl of whom I know absolutely nothing, whose sudden orphanage thrusts her upon me and makes her entirely dependent on my decisions and judgment.

If this overwhelming and stupendous charge was Arthur's son, I would welcome him but with distrust, recollecting his father's many failings, but I would cheerfully do the best I could for him.

I would have brought him here for his vacations and shipped him off to college, and looked after him as well, or as badly, as fathers usually look after their offspring. I would have stood by him, and pulled him out of the inevitable difficulties he would have gotten into, as is the way with youth.

But the ward Providence, in its fantastic decrees, has seen fit to afflict me with a girl.

Her name is Alma, and she is growing up to womanhood, so Penroy says in his epistle.

Of course, she must come to Branleigh Hall. I have instructed my housekeeper, Mrs. Brown, to prepare for her, and it is evident the advent of this disturbing element in our orderly household is no more to her liking than to mine.

Well, it can't be helped. Fate has willed it. The child will be here this afternoon and until I have arranged to send her to some college—there again, difficulty No. 1 looms up. What do I know which college is fitting for a girl's education? What influences should surround an unformed feminine mind on the verge of womanhood?

My gray hairs and that experience which I pride myself is varied and extensive, for having been accumulated at a vast cost to myself, stops short at the education and bringing up of a girl.

Perhaps she will bring herself up, with a complete scorn of my authority. If she is at all discerning and realizes on what uncertain theories and ideas it rests, she will certainly disregard it.

Ah, my boasted quietude! My life of calm, and undisturbed contentment—what will become of you, with this unwelcome element thrust upon us?

* * * * * *

Alma came last evening.

Penroy was wrong. She has already reached the threshold of a very magnificent womanhood. Alma has her mother's beauty idealized, and, if I mistake not, an energy neither of her parents ever possessed.

Has she Arthur's clever, subtle brain? His unscrupulous egotism.

I believe absolutely in inherited traits. Our acquaintance is too short for me to decide.

I have retreated to the library, with orders not to be disturbed on any account, in order to readjust conditions and work out this terrible problem, made ten times worse by Alma's beauty.

What am I to do with her? In justice to her youth, I cannot shut her up and keep her a prisoner in Branleigh Hall. But the college idea is out of the question. You can't send a remarkably handsome girl of 18 to college to get rid of her.

"Come in! Who is that? You, Mrs. Brown? Anything the matter with Miss Alma? I'm afraid she will find it pretty dull out here in the country. Have you any suggestion to make, Mrs. Brown?"

* * * * * *

There are always surprises to a man, in the feminine way of looking at things.

Now, my greatest dread had been that Mrs. Brown, the most faithful soul in the world and most admirable housekeeper, would resent Alma's coming to break up the methodical routine of our uneventful lives. I was afraid she would not be as cordial as I would have desired.

Alma had not been 24 hours at Branleigh when she owned Mrs. Brown body and soul, so to speak.

Mrs. Brown came to my study to suggest horse riding and rowing on the lake for Alma, and driving, croquet and a tennis court, and music lessons from the organist of the town, a German artist, so that Alma would not brood and be unhappy and want to go to live elsewhere.

"Do you mean to say, Mrs. Brown, you would grieve if Miss Alma left us?" I asked in astonishment.

"I do, sir," she answered with emphasis (her broad, pleasant face twitching slightly). "I do, sir. She is like sunshine in the house, and her voice is like the twittering of birds. Branleigh Hall will be the brighter for having a young thing like that running up and down the stairs and filling the rooms with talk and laughter. But we must not let her mope, if you'll excuse my saying so, sir. Perhaps a little company would cheer her a bit."

* * * * * *

So it had come to this. Branleigh Hall must be thrown open to callers, to be invaded at all hours of the day by our neighbors, and Alma's youth and legitimate pleasures are to banish the quiet, drowsy life of perfect contentment I had hoped would be mine for the rest of my days.

Mrs. Brown and Alma will expect me to entertain next, as soon as the child's mourning will permit. I see looming before me the horrors of a house party for next Christmas.

I am in a dragnet, and can only be released by one event.

Considering Alma's astonishing beauty and the report certain to get around that I have adopted my cousin Arthur's child, I don't suppose I will have to wait overlong for that propitious occurrence.

* * * * * *

Alma has been here three months. Mrs. Brown was right. She has chased the somber shadows out of these big, quiet rooms and the sound of her light footsteps, of her sweet voice calling me to go riding or boating with her, the exhilaration of her bright, lovely presence, has brought another life into Branleigh Hall.

* * * * * *

Alma saw very little of her father, she tells me. He wandered around the continent and at watering places (and Monte Carlo), while she was at school in a convent in Paris.

Her mother died ten years ago. I had not thought it so long. How time flies.

I am glad Alma was not with him. What a fascinating, honest child she is. His would have made a pernicious influence. Nor can Alma grieve for one she hardly knew.

"Are you happy, child?" I asked her a few evenings ago, when we came back from a brisk canter and I was lifting her down from her saddle.

"Happy? I never was so happy in all my life, Cousin Hugh," she said, resting her little gloved hands on my shoulders.

* * * * * *

I was passing by the wing part of the house the other day and heard Alma's joyous, mellow laugh. I stopped and looked in Mrs. Brown's room.

Alma sat on the floor, her sleeves rolled up, stemming strawberries for Mrs. Brown, who was concocting something at a table, and the theme of conversation I gathered was our family ghosts.

Alma's arms and hands are exquisite, like Parian marble. A ray of sunlight was falling over her splendid bronze hair, and I noticed her eyes were not purple blue, like her mother's, but a dark gray, honest, frank and true.

No, she had not inherited any of Arthur's traits.

* * * * * *

Of course the neighbors have flocked to Branleigh Hall as soon as I issued a few informal invitations.

Alma is clearly the sensation of the day and hour in our exclusive society.

But I wont have Catherine Weihtley and her fast set spoil my little girl and brush the bloom of her exquisite freshness away, by their reckless cynical society talk.

Sue Carrington laughed at me last night. "My dear Hugh," she said, "you are too absurd with that child. You are a hen with a duckling, positively. Nobody's going to steal your jewel, at least not to-night. A little later. But you are worrying needlessly. Alma is very clever, I assure you, and her convent education does not prevent her from forming her opinion about men and women—and a very accurate one it is. Nobody can spoil her."

I was glad such was Mrs. Carrington's opinion. Sue lives and breathes for her world social and Paquin is the idol she worships. But underneath her laces and frivolties, she has a warm heart, and considerable brains in her clever little worldly head.

Having assumed the responsibility of Alma's life, I must, of course, carry it through. The child must have her Paris gowns, and flirtations with brainless youth.

* * * * * *

I have not legally adopted Alma as my child. But I have remade my will. Branleigh Hall could never have a more exquisite mistress than Alma, and she will know how to administer these broad acres and properly care for the splendid old place. Penroy will see to the mines and other properties for her, should my guardianship be removed. Penroy is entirely trustworthy.

* * * * * *

I have no special reason for disliking the man, John Felton is considered a fine young fellow and a rising luminary in his profession. But his too great deference to my opinion jars on me. His attentions to Alma are entirely too conspicuous to be either in good taste, or ignored. Has he caught the child's fancy? God forbid!

* * * * * *

The night is quiet, and I have paced for long hours this deserted room, where Alma's presence lingers, striving to look into the troublous future.

My heart is heavy with foreboding, and wrung with sorrowful anxieties. Alma came into my life, and has glorified it. Am I to lose her and settle back into the gloom and dryrot of a useless and aimless existence? I will take Alma abroad.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Too Lonesome in Prague.

"Did you ever realize what a rasping sound a foreign language can have upon the human ear in a strange city, where one has no friends?" asked Judge A. A. Freeman, of New Mexico, one day recently. A veteran figure, Judge Freeman has held many offices of honor and emolument, having served for eight years as assistant attorney general in charge of the legal work of the post office department, says the Washington Post.

"President Grant appointed me consul to Prague, the ancient capital of Bohemia," continued the judge, who sat on the bench in New Mexico. "It is a beautiful old city, with many things to delight the visitor, but I was exceedingly lonesome there. The people were all strangers to me, and I did not understand the language. There were hundreds of remarkable places and buildings, places rich with historical interest, for Prague was founded in the year 900. But even the ancient historical places enhanced my gloom, and I began to realize how it is that soldiers can actually die of homesickness.

"One day I visited an ancient synagogue in one of the quaint sections of the city. The guide took me to the aged tombstones, where the inscriptions had been worn off by the elements. He was plodding, a man weary of delving into the past, among the graves of the long ago and reciting what those graves were.

"'My dear man,' I exclaimed, in despair, 'can't you show me a grave that was made yesterday It would be positively companionable.'

"It wasn't long afterward," concluded the judge, "that I resigned my consulship in the beautiful old city of Prague. It was too lonesome there for me."

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Held No Grudge.

Walking about one day in the land of shadows, Charles Dickens unexpectedly encountered Mr. Pecksniff.

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Dickens, "I hope you entertain no ill will toward me on account of the unenviable notoriety I seem to have given you."

"Sir," loftily replied Mr. Pecksniff, "you owe me no apology. The name of Pecksniff will be remembered long after the name of Dickens is forgotten!"—Chicago Tribune.

How He Knew.

Simpkins—How is it that you are always dressed to suit the weather and carry an umbrella at the right time? I read the government indications carefully, but I get left.

Timpkins—Oh, I don't bother with the forecasts. Got a better scheme than that.

Simpkins—What is it?

Timpkins—My wife. Always get her opinion and do just the reverse.—N. Y. Times.

Matter of Orthography.

"And what is your first name, Mr. Peck?" asked the directory canvasser.

"It was 'Claude' before I jumped the matrimonial hurdle," replied the scanty-haired Peck.

"Am I to understand that marriage altered your name?" queried the directory man.

"N—no, not exactly," replied the victim of circumstances, "only I spell it 'C-l-a-w-e-d' now."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Why He Was Alarmed.

Wedderly—I say, doctor, I wish you would drop in and see my wife some time to-day. I'm afraid she is going to have brain trouble.

Dr. Mixem—Why do you think that?

Wedderly—Because upon her return from church last Sunday she actually repeated the text, and never said a word about what the other women had on.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

His Idea of It.

A Canadian child was being instructed recently by his Sunday school teacher on the necessity for the death of Christ in order to open Heaven.

"If our Lord had not died for us," she asked of the boy, "where would we have gone?

"To the United States," he replied.—N. Y. Times.

The Longest Day.

Teacher—You must remember, children, that December 21 is the shortest day we have. Do you remember the longest?

Freddie—Yes'm, it's July 3, when you're waiting for firecracker day.—N. Y. Times.

Thought Well of Himself.

"Isn't it strange," remarked Mrs. Billins to her husband, "that I can never get a good bargain in shoes?"

"You did once," said her husband.

"When was that?"

"When you got me."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Two Points of View.

Wife—How people gaze at my new dress! I presume they wonder if I've been shopping in Paris.

Husband—More likely they wonder if I've been robbing a bank.—N. Y. Weekly.

Too Hasty.

"Jones has got a new addition to his family."

"Indeed? I must congratulate him."

"Hold on—it's a mon-in-law!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Not the Breath.

"No! I won't give you anything. I smell liquor on your breath."

"Well, can't you give me a nickel ter buy some cloves?"—Chicago American.

Victim of Heredity.

"The girl takes after her parents—
She takes her pose from her pa;"
"And certainly no one will question—
She takes her chin from her ma."
—Yonkers Statesman.

WHERE HE WINS.

Milkman—I know my milk is better'n other dealers' 'cause we use a filter on our pump.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Reduce and Affirm.

When [illegible] the Adirondacks [illegible]
One day he shakes you by the hand,
And later altogether.
—N. Y. Times.

Certainly.

"I like a man," she remarked, "who says exactly what he thinks."

"About somebody else, of course," suggested her chum.—Chicago Post.

The Idea.

Chauncey—I think I am deucedly dull—don't you?

Penelope—No; deucedly clever when you talk like that.—Judge.

A Chance for Scrimple.

"Mr. Scrimple," said the magnate to the young barrister, "I want to make use of your valuable services."

"Very well, sir," said Scrimple, as he gasped at the joyous prospect of a first brief. "What can I do for you?"

"A firm which competes with my house," replied the magnate, firmly, "is about to bring an action for damages against me, and I want you to get them to engage you as their counsel."—Tit-Bits.

A Disappointment.

"Of course," said the philosopher, "so rich a man as you must expect to be flattered and fawned upon."

"He must, eh!" exclaimed Mr. Cumrox, with a touch of indignation in his voice. "Well, I used to think so, but I hadn't made my first ten million before they began publishing caricatures of me and insinuating that I ate with my knife."—Washington Star.

A Calm Assumption.

To-day no credit comes to you
For being noble, wise or great;
The advertisers say it's due
Entirely to the foods you ate.
—Washington Star.

ONE OR THE OTHER.

"Oh, Mabel, I smell benzine! You've either been cleaning your gloves or out riding in Charley Jollie's new automobile."—Chicago Tribune.

The Truth of It.

The promised land ain't far away—
It's with us every minute;
The trouble is, we never know
The very time we're in it!
—Atlanta Constitution.

They Both Have It.

Mrs. Hoon—The Scrappingtons seem to be quarreling most of the time. Mr. Scrappington talks to his wife in a way that is positively awful.

Mr. Hoon—Yes, and she talks to him in a way that is awfully positive. And there they both have it.—Town Topics.

A Gentle Reminder.

"Yes," remarked young DeBorem, "it is undoubtedly true that every dog has his day."

"Possibly," rejoined Miss Wearyun, as she glanced at the clock and strangled a yawn, "but he doesn't sit up all night waiting for it."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Worth Trying.

"If there is anything that will make a fool appear wise," remarked young Softem, "it is silence."

"Perhaps you are right, Mr. Softun," remarked Miss Caustique. "You, at least could lose nothing by trying the experiment.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Not Ornamental.

Tess—Yes, he called to see me last night, and of all the clumsy men—

Jess—Oh, I know him. Isn't he a bird?

Tess—No, he isn't; but he seemed to think he was last night. He sat on my hat.—Philadelphia Press.

At the Restaurant.

Mary had a little lamb
A century ago.
The chops on which we dined to-day
Were from that lamb, I know.
—Chicago Record-Herald.

No Matter to Him.

Mrs. von Blumer—What are you going to do with those awful cigars?

Von Blumer—I'm saving them for a friend of mine who has just become a Christian Scientist.—Life.

His Modesty Explained.

"The major is the most modest and retiring of men."

"What business is he in?"

"Moonshine distillery!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Confirmed.

Elder Squirrel—Do you think there's any chance of his reforming?

Deacon Squirrel—I'm afraid not. He turns over nothing but old leaves.—Puck.

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