

THE CROSS ROADS.

Out from the prison at twilight,
With stealthy, terrible swiftness,
Dated one of the brand, his beating in every vein,
Freedom stirring his pulses
Gladness and fear and longing
Surging through brain and body with precious, unwanted pain.

Out from the damp, dark cell,
The shackles, the sorrowful silence,
Out from the ring of faces and the jarring stern commands,
The glister of garrulous brooklets,
And the dim, kindly evening he blessed with his weary hands.

On, like the sweep of a scimitar,
Dashed he, cutting the darkness,
Or as the storm blows on, none knowing its way or its will;
Cumbered with horrible fears,
Leaped he the perilous ledges,
Reaching the village that lay in the valley, untroubled and still.

Midway of his sickening haste,
Sudden he faltered and swooned,
Seeing three stand by a window, as the breeze loitering blew;
A woman, sad-featured and patient,
Two golden heads at her shoulder,
Dear eyes, he made shine once—dear childish hair that he knew!

Not yet, for surely the blood-hounds
Would track him thither to-morrow;
Not yet! tho' soon that door should open, as long ago;
Dashing the tear from his cheeks,
He rushed on. Had they seen it, the poor, wan face? Did they know?

Here meet the roads; see eastwards,
The long, clear track to the forest;
These with chestnuts shaded, the path to the inland town;
Behind, a glimpse of the village.
Front—four sharp cliffs to the ocean;
Quickly, which shall he choose? Hark, the captors are hunting him down

Shuffle of hurrying feet,
Breathing nearer and nearer,
No choice for a man who is doomed, unless straight to the merciful sea.
Up to the toilsome cliffs!
Better death than new anguish!
A cry, a plunge. . . . Shine, stars, on the ripples that ring that sea.

Soft in the ominous shadow the branches stir by the meadow,
Fair in the lonely distance the dying household glow;
Deep in the heart of the street,
Just where the four roads meet,
Two trembling forms where he stood a moment so;
And a wistful child's voice said,
Touched with great trouble and dread,
"Oh, little sister, which way did father go?"

—Louise Imogene Guiney

"THE WOOING O'T."

By HELEN FORREST GRAVES

"Don't you know me?" asked Martha Minkley.

The Rev. Paul Blossom was digging up the bed for late peas, under the pink clouds of the apple boughs, with his straw hat tilted on the top of his head, his linen coat fluttering in the wind and his brow beaded with perspiration.

One little Blossom was following at his heels with a toy rake, smoothing down the lumps of fragrant earth; a second was building houses with clam shells, in the angle of the garden wall, while two others were engaged in the wholesale manufacture of mud pies, at the kitchen doorsteps—all four dirty, happy and demoralized.

Mr. Blossom looked hard at Martha. He was a little near-sighted, a little absent-minded, and yet surely this sweet, cherry-cheeked woman was none of the sisters of his flock!

"No," said Mr. Blossom; "I can't say—that I do."

Miss Minkley smiled and colored a little.

"Try and think back," said she, "to the days of the Wesleyan Seminary, on Rose River, where we recited Roman history in the same class, and old Doctor Dodge heard us in rhetoric and English literature—old Doctor Dodge, who wore green spectacles and talked through his nose!"

Mr. Blossom dropped his spade. "It's Matty Minkley," said he. "But, dear me, how you've changed!"

"I haven't grown any younger, I suppose," said Martha, biting her lip. "But that's a complaint that is common to us all, Mr. Blossom."

"Yes, I know—I know!" admitted Paul, turning red to the roots of his hair, as he realized what an awkward mistake he had made. "Time doesn't spare any of us. And then, feeling that he had not bettered matters, he made haste to ask: And how came you in Toppleton Village?"

"My cousin's husband, Hiram Dodd, keeps the hotel," said Martha. "I've come to see about a situation as housekeeper for a gentleman that Mrs. Dodd knows; for I am not above earning my own living, Mr. Blossom."

She spoke with a little fullness in her throat, for she had somehow cherished Paul Blossom's memory kindly since those boy and girl days, and now he never even asked her to "Come in!"

"He might have introduced me to his wife, at least," said Miss Minkley to herself, as she walked swiftly and lightly along the green path under the spreading maple trees. "That wouldn't have been too much for old acquaintance's sake. But if he chooses to forget old times, I can only follow his lead. I wouldn't have thought it of him, though."

And the waving billows of the distant orchard swam in the disks of two big trees, which momentarily obscured Miss Minkley's bright, black eyes.

And Mr. Blossom mechanically dug the pea bed up, planted the "wrinkled marrowfats," and went into the house, where his sister, a middle-aged spinster, of a careworn aspect and a very uncertain temper, was engaged in single combat with the children.

"I declare, Paul!" she croaked, catching sight of her brother, "them children are enough to try the patience of Job. All washed clean this morning, and mended and darned—and now look at 'em! Why, a gypsy gang couldn't be more discreditable in their appearance!"

Mr. Blossom looked feebly at the chubby, rosy, dirty flock.

"It never used to be so when Mary was alive," said he.

"Well, and that's just what I am saying," said Miss Blossom, tartly;

"and what I say every day in the week—you ought to marry again."

"Yes," said Mr. Blossom, with a sigh. "I suppose I ought."

And by some curious link of ideas he thought of Martha Minkley, standing out there among the apple blossoms, with the delicate pink color on her cheeks, and the old roguish sparkle in her black eyes.

"Certainly you ought," said Miss Blossom, thinking of Hester Henderson, the village dressmaker, who had money in the bank, which ought fairly to compensate for her Gorgon-like severity of countenance. "Some one of mature age and ripened judgment—"

"Of course! of course!" said the Rev. Paul.

"Who will best her position as a clergyman's wife, and keep your house for you in a model manner, as it should be kept," went on Miss Blossom, "and govern your children with discretion and kindness."

"Yes, to be sure," said Mr. Blossom. "I believe I know the very person to realize all these ideals."

"So do I," said Miss Blossom, oracularly. "And not a hundred miles away, either!"

"In this very village," said Paul.

"Exactly," nodded his delighted sister.

"It is certainly my duty," said Mr. Blossom. "And somehow, upon this day of all days, I feel moved to fulfill it."

And he put on his best suit, and went straightway to the Eagle Hotel, kept by Hiram Dodd and wife, Elvira.

"Is Miss Minkley to be seen?" he asked, politely, of Mrs. Dodd, who came out from the kitchen with carmine cheeks, and wiping her hands upon a snowy roller towel.

"Oh, yes, I guess so!" said Mrs. Dodd, smiling and courtesying to the clergyman. "Squire Telwright has just been to see her; but I'm pretty sure that he has gone now. Mat—Matty, where are you? Oh, she's in the blue parlor! Please to walk in, Mr. Blossom."

And the clergyman walked solemnly into the pretty blue-carpeted room, with its much-waxed mahogany chairs, gaudy rug, and stiff starched muslin curtains, where Martha Minkley sat knitting.

"Miss Minkley," said he, entering without unnecessary prelude on the subject which was at present absorbing his mind, "we have known each other from childhood."

"Yes," said Martha.

"And I believe you to be a devout Christian, a conscientious woman and a good housekeeper."

"I hope I am," said Miss Martha, rather flattered by this unusual address.

"In my house," said Mr. Blossom, abruptly, "I need all three. And I believe Providence has put it into my head and heart to appeal to you at this critical opportunity."

Miss Minkley neither blushed, giggled, nor burst into tears. She rocked back and forth, went composedly on with the red worsted sock that she was knitting, and lifted her black eyebrows just the least little trifle.

"I'm very sorry," said she. "I only wish you had been a little earlier, but I'm engaged already."

"Engaged?"

Mr. Blossom's lower jaw fell; he stood blankly looking at her.

"To Mr. Telwright!" explained Miss Minkley.

"But he's sixty!" cried Mr. Blossom.

"He is not young," admitted Martha.

"Surely, surely, Martha," argued Paul, forgetting all formalities in his eager interest, "you cannot care for him?"

"N—no," said Martha, "I can't say that I do. But he offers me a very good home."

"Is it possible, Martha," said the good clergyman, "that you can allow yourself to be swayed by considerations like this?"

"One must do the best one can for oneself," said Miss Minkley.

"Well, well," sighed Mr. Blossom, "it would be downright sinful to doubt that all is ordered for the best, it is the will of heaven. I always liked you, Martha, and I believe your life with me would have been both useful and pleasant. At least, no effort of mine should have been lacking to make it so."

"I'm very sorry," said Martha, demurely. "But first come first served, you know."

"I should like occasionally to call and see you," said the clergyman. "You will still be in my parish, you know."

"Oh, certainly," said Martha. "I hope we shall always be the best of friends."

And Mr. Blossom almost fancied that, for a quarter of a second, the tender grasp of his hand was in some measure returned.

He walked dejectedly out. "I am too late," Mrs. Dodd, he said, meeting the cheery landlady, who was coming in with a pair of newly-brightened brass candlesticks.

"Dear, dear, sir!" said Mrs. Dodd. "She has already promised herself to Mr. Telwright. Though how, to be sure, she could ever have made his acquaintance—"

"She wasn't acquainted with him, sir," said Mrs. Dodd. "Not at all. At least not until I introduced 'em, an hour ago!"

The Rev. Paul looked horrified.

"And yet," he gasped, "she is going to marry him!"

Mrs. Dodd, in her consternation, dropped one of the brass candlesticks.

"Bless your heart alive, sir!" she cried out, "she ain't a-goin' to do nothing of the kind. She's only going to be housekeeper for him, at twenty dollars a month, and two servants kept. You wasn't a-meanin', sir, to—"

"I was asking her to be my wife," said Mr. Blossom, solemnly; "and I fully believed that she understood me to that effect."

Mrs. Dodd grabbed eagerly at the sleeve of his coat.

"She couldn't!" said she. "Just wait a bit, sir—wait a bit. Martha! Mat! Come out here this minute! You haven't understood a word that the Rev. Mr. Blossom has said to you. He has asked you to marry him!"

The knitting fell from Miss Minkley's hands; she turned very pale, and began to tremble. Was it then, true—the crushed-out, forgotten dream of her whole life? The reaching instinct of her hungering heart? Did some one really love her at last—even her?

"I—I didn't comprehend!" said she. "I supposed that he wanted me to be his housekeeper. I believed that his wife was living."

"She's been dead these four years," interjected Mrs. Dodd. "And if ever there was a saint upon earth, Martha Minkley, and a man as any woman might be proud to marry, it is Mr. Paul Blossom."

Martha held out her hands.

"Paul," said she, forgetting all the years that had elapsed since they were a boy and girl together at the Wesleyan Seminary, "do you care for me? Do you love me, Paul?"

"I do," he answered, solemnly.

"Then I will be your wife," said Martha, with a little sob.

In this world nothing is altogether satisfactory. The Rev. Paul Blossom was happy; so was Martha Minkley; so were the children, and, in a lesser degree, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Dodd. But Miss Jimima Blossom was not at all pleased, after having selected Miss Hester Henderson as her brother's second wife. Neither was Miss Henderson herself, who had already settled on the color of her wedding hat. And Squire Telwright was compelled to advertise for a suitable housekeeper, after all.

But Love, a late-blooming flower in some lives, was beginning to brighten Miss Martha Minkley's solitary existence at last; and what mattered anything else?—New York Weekly.

No iron ore is mined in the province of British Columbia. The only attempt therat, at Quasno Sound, Vancouver Island, has been found unprofitable and abandoned. The mining of zinc ore is also practically at a standstill.

HORTICULTURE HINTS

PRUNING SHRUBS.

Prune the flowering shrubs after they have bloomed, not before, and do not cut back shrubbery indiscriminately. The idea is to cut out the old flowering wood and give the young growth a chance.

POULTRY IS WELCOME.

Fruits of all kinds welcome poultry. The poultry takes advantage of the feed to be found in the orchard and thrives in the midst of the shade. No artificial shade is equal to a good fruit bush.—Farmer's Home Journal.

FREE FROM WEEDS.

Keep the sides of the garden free from weeds and tall grass. In these many of the insect pests spend a part of their existence. Then if they are kept down, there is not so much danger of the crops being assaulted by the pests.—Farmer's Home Journal.

BORDEAUX FOR BLIGHT.

Blight and the beetles that attack melons or cucumbers can be subdued by spraying the under side of the leaves with Bordeaux mixture every ten days, care being taken to remove all diseased leaves. Growers often plant squash or pumpkins as a catch crop, as the beetles are said to prefer them to the melons or cucumbers.

PERENNIAL SUNFLOWERS.

The perennial sunflowers need but little recommendation, with their abundance of bright, golden yellow blossoms and clean foliage. To insure success, however, it is necessary that the ground to receive the plants is properly prepared beforehand. Thoroughly well trench and loosen the soil, getting the best on the top; the dig in good stable manure, as the roots of perennials strike deeply. Spring is the best time for dividing or planting, but avoid doing so when the ground is wet or sodden. Good results are often obtained by making large holes and then filling with a light, open compost containing a fair proportion of leaf mold and sharp sand. Given suitable conditions, most perennials will soon repay the original small outlay and extra trouble in planting correctly.—Indianapolis News.

FERTILIZING THE GARDEN.

There is no better way to fertilize the garden than to haul fresh manure from the stable and spread over the surface during the winter. Contrary to the common belief, there is never a time when manure is so rich in plant food as the day it is made, and the sooner after that it can be got to the place where it is to be used, the more value it will add to the soil.

It is almost impossible to put too much manure on a garden. If put a foot thick on the surface it will leach so much more plant food into the soil, and by plowing time, the following spring, will be settled down until it can be plowed under to furnish humus for the betterment of the physical conditions of the soil.

Wood ashes make an excellent fertilizer for the garden, but it should be saved and applied on top of the soil after it is plowed in the spring, as potash is one of the plant foods that may be washed too deeply into the soil to be reached by the roots of the garden plants, many of which are shallow rooted.—Epitomist.

BEAUTIFUL GARDEN HEDGES.

Hedges that are not boundary markers can be made of many beautiful flowering shrubs, some of which are seldom used for such a purpose. For example, says the Gardeners' Magazine, nothing can exceed the loveliness of "syringa" hedges including a rosary, or beds of roses and lilliums, set either in grass or gravel. There are several excellent varieties of the "syringa," or mock orange, Philadelphia roseaeformis being one with immense semi-double flowers; P. Gordoniana, coming into beauty rather late and being especially prodigal of bloom, and P. puriflorus, claiming attention as an extra rapid and tall grower. Then the exquisite Philadelphia purpurea maculata might be represented, whose large white blossoms have a mauve-rose blotch on each petal.

Hedges of mixed varieties of one shrub are usually more successful than those in which different species of shrubs are combined, yet the latter have plenty of charm and should be planted in situations where uniformity of height is not required. One might contain Philadelphia roseaeformis, Escallonia macrantha, Viburnum Opulus, Cistus ladaniferus, laurustinus, Ribes sanguineum, and Symplocarpus radicans, the snowberry tree. All could be pruned into a small garden would certainly serve to introduce beautiful subjects for which room could not be otherwise found.—Indianapolis News.

Sheds His Skin Like Snake.

For the twenty-eighth time in the last fifty-three years William O. Cate is shedding his skin as a snake does. Instead of periodical casting aside of the cuticle, Cate is likely to shed his skin at any time. Specialists call it "dermatitis exfoliativa."

Two years ago he had the grip and took belladonna. His skin came off three times within the next fourteen weeks.

Cate enjoys good health, except for this strange malady.—Trenton (N. J.) Correspondence Chicago Tribune.

PENNSYLVANIA

Interesting Items from All Sections of the Keystone State.

FIRE SWEEPS CENTRALIA

Three Squares of Property Burned and 65 Families Homeless.

Centralia.—Sixty-five families are homeless in this city as the result of a fire which wiped out three squares of property in the heart of the town.

The first started late at night in a building occupied by a moving picture show and spread rapidly among the frame houses. Fire companies from Ashland and Mt. Carmel responded, but a lack of water, the result of the prolonged drouth, left the town at the mercy of the flames for a time. None of the homeless families saved any of their furniture. Citizens of the town have made temporary arrangements for the care of the families. The total loss is estimated at \$100,000.

ARMORY QUESTION UP

State Legislature Will be Asked to Build Homes for Its Soldiers.

Harrisburg.—The State armory board will ask the State legislature to appropriate \$900,000 for the building of armories throughout the State, considering that this amount is necessary because of the numerous demands for such buildings which have come from almost every county in the Commonwealth. The amount appropriated two years ago was \$400,000.

Among the towns for which armory propositions are now pending are "Leakstown," which is in the hands of the First brigade committee; Warren, Altoona, Hollidaysburg, Sunbury, Lancaster, York, Pottsville, Allentown and Johnstown.

THIEVES LOOT HOME OF DEAD

Jewels and Art Worth \$90,000 Stolen in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia.—It was learned that \$90,000 worth of art had disappeared from 1239 North Broad street, the home of Mrs. George Wood, who was found dead there on October 13.

The disappearance of the valuables and the cause of the woman's death are equally mysterious. Her body had lain in the house at least a day when it was discovered. A copy of Leonardo Davinci's famous "Mona Lisa" is missing. This painting was the rarest and best in the wealthy widow's collection. Once she placed a valuation of \$15,000 upon it.

ESCAPE IS FOILED

Prisoner Conceals Key to Handcuffs Under His Tongue.

Kittanning.—Deputy Sheriff Thomas Shaner probably frustrated Robert Leslie's plan to gain his liberty while being taken to the Western penitentiary to serve a three-year sentence.

Leslie had concealed a small key, supposedly intended to open his handcuffs, under his tongue and was debating removing it from his mouth by the deputy after they were on the train. It is alleged Leslie was one of a gang of robbers which has been working in northern Westmoreland and southern Armstrong counties.

GRANGER'S DEMANDS

Opposition to Governor Stuart's Trans-State Project Develops.

Altoona.—The State Grange was overwhelmed with resolutions, among which was one declaring for local option, and another deprecating Governor Stuart's recommendation of a trans-State road.

"Farmer" Cressy's proposition, which has been approved by the legislative committee, is for State roads from one county seat to another throughout the entire State at an approximate cost of \$5,000,000, to be paid in 10 years.

One resolution proposes that the State shall appropriate \$40 for the salary of every public school teacher.

Woman's Dream Reveals Spring.

Oil City.—Residents of Cherry Tree township are excited over the discovery of a spring by Benjamin Walters, who dug at a spot indicated to his mother in a dream. Recently farmers have been driving their stock to a stream three miles distant, but the creek froze over. One night Mrs. Walters dreamed water was pouring from the ground in the orchard. The son dug a hole 18 inches deep and a stream big enough to supply the entire neighborhood gushed forth.

Alleged Forger Is Arrested.

Harrisburg.—F. G. Cummings, alias J. K. Smith, Jr., who is accused of forgeries in Altoona, York, Johnstown and other places in Central Pennsylvania, was arrested here as he was procuring a packet of checks which he had ordered printed with the name of a York firm. The man's scheme was to show several checks and ask a firm to cash one upon presentation of a letter.

Reading's Fever Scourge.

Reading.—Up to December 5 563 cases of typhoid fever have been reported to the Board of Health in this city.

Leaves Estate to Church.

Greensburg.—In the will of Nancy Bardors of Mt. Pleasant, she gives all her property, consisting of two houses in Mt. Pleasant and \$1,400 in money, to the general eldership of the Church of God, to be used by the general assembly as a permanent fund for foreign missions.

Good Well Drilled In.

New Castle.—A 20-barrel oil well was struck by the New Castle Oil Company on the Wallinger farm near Edenburg.

HISTORIC TAVERN SOLD

Lawson Hotel in West Alexander Once Sheltered Lafayette.

Washington.—The Lawson hotel property in West Alexander has been purchased by W. B. Hicks of Wheeling, E. M. Atkinson of Elm Grove and J. C. Chambers of this place for \$6,000.

The hotel, which has been in possession of the Lawson family almost a century, is a landmark, and entertained Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Lafayette and many other distinguished men.

Receiver for Seward Interests.

Johnstown.—Creditors of the Seward Coal Company, the Seward Brick Company and the Seward Supply Company met here and agreed with the management of the Ogle cerns upon the appointment of Ogle Walters, local real estate dealer, as receiver for extensive coal, brick and distore properties in and near Seward. The assets are estimated at \$200,000. The liabilities may reach \$100,000.

Chaplain of the "Bucktails" Dead.

Harrisburg.—The Rev. W. H. D. Hutton, aged 81, chaplain of the First Pennsylvania "volunteers," known as the "Bucktails," died here. Mr. Hutton was a native of Carlow, Ireland and filed Episcopal charges in Kansas City, Wyandotte and Leavenworth, Kas.; Jefferson City, Mo., where he was also president of a girls' seminary. He was an authority on church matters and prominent in Harrisburg life.

Cherry Tree Has Disastrous Fire.

Johnstown.—Fire of unknown origin, which started in the M. A. McQuown skating rink, destroyed property valued at \$15,000 at Cherry Tree, Indiana county. The heaviest losses were: The Baptist church, \$4,000; M. A. McQuown, \$5,000; Jesse Berlinger, livery stable, \$3,000; Joseph Grovelly, blacksmith shop, \$1,000; Harvey Brickley carriage shop, \$1,000; Dr. Peterman, residence, \$500; Hallam hotel, \$300.

Mars & Evans City R. R. Chartered.

Harrisburg.—The Allegheny & Northwestern Railroad Company, which is to run between Mars and Evans City, Butler county, seven miles, was chartered here, with \$70,000 capital. The directors are John G. McPherson, president; David Dillinger, William E. Heller, C. S. Jarvis and J. L. Killip, all of Philadelphia.

Superior Court Refuses Mrs. Hartje.

Philadelphia.—The superior court refused to advance the argument on Augustus Hartje's appeal from Judge Robert S. Frazer's decision awarding Mrs. Mary Scott Hartje \$7,500 for counsel fees and over \$13,000 for expenses incurred in the divorce suit brought by Hartje. Mrs. Hartje asked that the argument be advanced, but it will now come up in regular order next spring.

Pharmacists Fail to Pass.

Harrisburg.—Less than half the applicants for certificates as pharmacists or qualified assistants successfully passed the recent examination before the State Pharmaceutical Board. One hundred and twelve applicants tried for pharmacists' certificates and only 51 succeeded, and of 150 applicants for assistants' certificates only 72 qualified.

\$2,000 Fees for Suit Over \$20.

Greensburg.—For a small strip of land worth \$20 J. B. Cochran and John S. Lauffer, Salem township farmers and neighbors, went to law. The Cochran got a verdict for \$15. The litigation was over a boundary line. The costs will be \$1,000 and attorney fees another \$1,000.

Teacher Proves Heroine at Fire.

Sayre.—Fire started in the East Side school house, endangering the lives of many pupils. It was first discovered in the primary room and the children fled panic stricken toward the door, but Miss Harriet Sammons, the teacher, soon checked the stampede and all passed out uninjured.

To Enforce Child-Labor Law.

Harrisburg.—The factory inspectors of the State will begin their close inspection of stores for any violations of the law prohibiting employment of children over certain hours. The inspectors have been given the usual holiday orders.

Kittanning's Athletic Minister.

Kittanning.—To help the team representing his congregation in the local church league the Rev. F. S. McBride, pastor of the United Presbyterian church, has joined the players and made his debut on the floor when the Baptists were defeated by a score of 35 to 4. Mr. McBride threw five five goals.

Oil City.—The 15-year-old daughter of Andrew Hendrickson of Tidouit, was accidentally shot and killed by a younger brother, who was examining a shotgun which was discharged.

Prohibitionists Show Defeat.

Franklin.—Prohibition State Chairman D. B. McCalmont, has forwarded to Harrisburg the campaign statement of the State committee from December 1, 1908. The receipts were \$10,055.63 and the expenditures \$10,708.38.

\$3,000 for Death of Husband.

Greensburg.—In her suit against the Baltimore & Ohio railroad for the death of her husband, who was killed by a train at Smithton, Mrs. Pearl Morrow obtained a verdict of \$3,000.