

A log cabin out on the Western plains, with snows that drift and drift around it. Overhead a gray, dark sky that seems, if you gaze up into it long enough to get the spirit of its expression to hold some agony of despair or death.

There is, however, a kind of wild strong life in the scene that lies beneath—spreading itself away from the windows of that lonely log cabin, standing there as a solitary witness of human life in the midst of the wild, white dreariness of the plains.

Perhaps the little girl feels this.—She is not old enough to conscientiously think it—the little girl with a thin sallow face, which somehow suggests fever and ague, flattened up against the pane, looking out with a singular alert watchfulness over the wide, white plains and through the rushing gusts of snow until her gaze touches the gray horizon afar off.

The winds came in furiously from the east like the roaring of tides, or the trampling of battalions of armed men, and dash down with fierce roar and cry on the thick clouds of snow, flakes, and hunt and drive them back and forth, and toss them apart, and ride back and forth over the plains, making of the air one vast trumpet through which they shriek their choruses of victory.

Inside of the cabin, a man's voice asks suddenly—'Bessie, child, has no body come in sight yet?' A man's voice, I said and yet struck through with some pain and hollowness, which made you feel that it's words were nearly ended.

'No, father,' answered the little girl drawing her thin sallow face away from the window, 'there is nothing to be seen but blinding snow.'

'Hark! don't you hear something?' said the hollow voice breaking in here, sharp, hungry, impatient.

'No, father; the wind blows and blows; that is all.'

The tones were those of a girl, but there was nothing in the low, dreary voice that was like girlhood. Then the speaker turned to the fire, placed some fresh wood on the embers, and came back to her watch by the window; dreary work enough for any age, but doubly so to one whose life had not covered its fourteenth summer.

The room had a generally comfortable expression. Yet there was not, after all, so much lack of material but want of care discernible throughout the apartment.

On the bed in one corner lay the owner of the log-cabin. One look into the shrunken face, the hollow eyes all lying in that shadow of ashy pallor, and you would have been certain the man had laid himself down to die, and that the one guest who comes sooner or later over all thresholds, had come now to that lonely log-cabin out on the western plains.

None could know it better than Josiah Keep, as he lay there, with the winter storm howling outside, and the years of his life coming up one after another, and standing with their solemn, reproachful faces before him.

For this man's life had not been a good one. I cannot go into the details here of selfishness which had marred, and passion which had defiled his days; but the end had come now; and the hard, strong, fierce will had bowed itself at last before the solemn voices of conscience echoing amid all the tumult of his soul, as it glared face to face with death.

There was one deed of Josiah Keep's life which somehow troubled him more than all the others, and from it he in some sense dated the commencement of his wrong career, although the self-willed, reckless, passionate boyhood and youth had ripened into the hard, selfish, defiant manhood.

Here, too, it is sufficient to say that he had overreached his partner in a manner which the law could not take hold of; he had, to save his own fortune completely wrecked the other's and the wrong had not ended there. It had been the means of driving his partner's young wife—a fine souled sensitive woman—to madness and her grave.

Afterwards Josiah Keep had prospered for years, for a sentence is not always executed speedily against an evil work; but at last his goods and possessions began to fall away from him.

He had passed the meridian of his life when misfortune overtook him.—Then his wife and one and another of his children died. Ill health came upon the strong man, and the lonely log-cabin on the plains, where he had buried himself for a couple of years, and the one little sallow-checked daughter who remained of all the brave sons and fair girls who had called him father, tell the rest of the sad story of Josiah Keep.

In later life, the partner, whose young life he had so cruelly blighted, had prospered on every hand—a good man, with a ripe tender nature, full of broad sympathies, such as one does not often see. Everybody said this of Benjamin May.

And two or three weeks before, the sick man had learned through a neighbor that business had brought his former partner to the town nearest his log-cabin, and only fifty miles away. At first it seemed to him that the world itself could not hire him to look in the face of one whom he had so

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wronged; but as the end drew near, and remorseful memories crowded fast upon him, this first feeling was superseded by a great hunger and craving to hear Benjamin May's voice say that he forgave him, 'for God is more merciful than men,' thought Josiah Keep.

So, two days before, he had hired a neighbor to go in quest of Benjamin May, desiring the latter to come to him, as he hoped for mercy in his last extremity, and not daring even then to disclose his real name, lest the old bitterness should rise up in the soul of the other, and he would refuse to grant what he would deny to no other man—the prayer of Josiah Keep.

So he lay there with the tide of his life going out, and the lights burning low, while the storm shouted fiercely outside, and death and that young girl watched by the sick man.

'Bessie,' he called at last—and she was at his side in a moment.

'How sick you do look, father,' smoothing the iron-gray hair with one hand, and looking at him, her small, sallow face full of a great pity and grief, although Bessie Keep had no idea of that unseen presence just now crossing the threshold.

'Bessie, poor little Bessie, what will become of you?' said the dying man, looking with a craving tenderness which it seemed must have turned stone to pity on the little girl.

Whatsoever his faults had been, he had loved her, the last of his family, the delicate clinging, helpless child, who still of all the world clung fast to him in unwavering faith and tenderness.

'Ah, never mind me, father, dear. I shall get along well enough if you'll only grow better.'

Tears strained themselves into the child's eyes; she put her cheek down to her father's and wondered that it felt so cold, and drew the coverlet closer around him, and the storm thundered on outside, and the wind whirled white banners of snow through the air, and Josiah Keep lay dying, dying, dying!

Suddenly the child lifted her head. 'I hear something, father; that is not like the wind,' she said; 'it sounds like horses' feet,' and she sprang to the window.

'There, close at hand, toiling thro' the beating wind and driving snow, she saw a wagon with two occupants. The men, worn out and half frozen, sprang from the wagon just after Bessie's joyful shriek, that reached them above the howling of the storm.—'They are here! Oh, father, they are here!'

A man a little past his prime, strong and hale, with white hair about a face which never left any one who studied it a doubt of the heart beneath it, was Benjamin May.

He came up now to the bedside, and with the first glance at the face lying there, the face dropped, and drawn in the ashy pallor of death, Benjamin May forgot all the chill and weariness which had possessed him.

'My friend, I have come to hear what you have to say,' he answered, bending tenderly over the dying man.

Josiah Keep looked up in the face of man he had wronged so vitally more than a score of years ago. Despite the cheerful, kindly countenance there were lines that he had helped to carve.

'Do you know me?'

Benjamin May looked at the gastly face. Something familiar struck him in the sharp features. His memory half cleared up, yet he shook his head.

'No.'

'I am—Josiah Keep.'

The listener covered his face with his hands a moment. 'Ah, dear God!' he said, but not lightly, even in the shock and horror of that moment.

'I have sent for you, Benjamin May, to hear whether you will look on me, lying here, and say you forgive me for all the evil I once did you and yours. I want God's mercy now, and it seems to me I cannot lay hold of any hope for that until I have first had yours.'

It was an awful moment for Benjamin May. All his life long he had carried the fire of one bitterness burning deep in his soul. And now the wrecked hopes of his early manhood, the fair, still face of the young wife that he had ban down in her grave, the death of Josiah Keep was her murderer, rose up before him, and his heart throbbed a moment with the old fierceness of its youth. It was but a moment. Then he looked again on the face of his ancient enemy, and the fearful craving of those dying eyes was all that remained.

'I forgive you the wrong,' said Benjamin May, taking the cold hand in his, and by so much as God's mercy is greater than mine, may he also forgive you.'

Then there came a swift shriek, as of a heart suddenly broken, a swift shriek along with the last words of Benjamin May. 'Ah, father, you are not going to die and leave me in this

dreadful world all alone—all alone!' moaned Bessie Keep.

The dying man lifted his head.—'There is nobody to whom I can give the child, Benjamin. Promise me that you will not leave her here to perish, that you will take her away with you, and place her in some orphan asylum—promise me quick before I die.'

And Benjamin May looked at the small, thin figure, at the sallow face within its cloud of bright, brown hair, and the awful anguish stamped upon it moved his soul to its depths.

His sons had grown to be men, his one little daughter had followed her mother home, leaving him a memory of soft blue eyes, and sweet smiles dawning and fitting among dimples, to haunt all his after life.

A great pity and tenderness for this child, orphaned, friendless, beggared, came over him. He put out his arm and drew her to his breast—he laid his hand on the bright, floating hair.

'Josiah,' he said, 'I will take the child to my home—to my heart. She shall be to me in place of the daughter that has gone, and I will be to her in all things in the stead of her father.'

A smile crept over the ghastly face sinking into death. 'Now I can believe that God will have mercy upon me. Now after this I can believe it,' murmured Josiah Keep and they were the last words he ever spoke.

And sobbing and clinging to her new father, with her face hidden away close to the heart that would never fail her in love and care, Bessie Keep had not dared to look upon the face of the dead. But Benjamin May had; and seeing his ancient enemy lying low before him and remembering the forgiveness which he had carried out as precious freight from the coasts of time to the shores of eternity the man murmured to himself, 'Except ye have the spirit of Christ ye are none of His.'

And it was this spirit which Benjamin May had shown to his ancient enemy.

Evils of Gossip.

I have known a country society to wither away all to nothing under the dry-roof of gossip only. Friendship, once as firm as granite, dissolved to jelly, and then run to water, only because of this; love, that promised a future as enduring as heaven and as staple as truth, evaporated into a morning mist, turned to a day's tears only because of this; a father and son were set foot to foot with the fiery breath of anger that would never cool again between them, only because of this, and a husband and his young wife, each straining at the fatal lash, which in the beginning had been the golden bondage of a God-blessed love, sat mournfully by the side of the grave where all their love and joy lay buried, and only because of this. I have seen faith transformed to mean doubt, hope to give place to grim despair, and charity take on itself the features of black malevolence, all because of the spell words of scandal, and the magic mutterings of gossip.

Great crimes were great wrongs, and deeper tragedies of human life spring from its larger passions; but woeful and most melancholy are the uncalculated tragedies that issue from gossip and detraction; most mournful the shipwreck often made of noble natures and lovely lives by the bitter words of slander. So easy to say yet so hard to disprove—throwing on the innocent and punishing as guilty it unable to pluck out the stings they never see, and to silence words they never hear. Gossip and slander are the deadliest and cruellest weapons man has for his brother's hurt.—All the Year Round.

COLD IN THE HEAD.—When a person takes a cold it will "settle" in the head, throat, chest, bowels or joints, according to circumstances; if in the head, inducing unpleasant "stuffing up" and an interruption of the sense of smell. An immediate and grateful relief is experienced sometimes by applying a smelling-bottle (hartshorn) to the nose and keeping it there until it begins to be felt, then remove the bottle for a moment and reapply as before; this is repeated seven or eight times in the course of a few moments—the nostrils are freed and the sense of smell restored. This same hartshorn gives almost instant relief from the effects of the poisonous bites of all insects, vermin and reptiles by bathing the parts bitten, very freely.—Hall's Journal of Health.

An exchange describes a bachelor as "a wild goose in the air, much abused and as much envied by tame geese in the barn yard."

"Sam, are you one of the southern chivalry?" "No, massa, I's one of the Southern shovelry. I shoveled dirt at the Dutch Gap Canal."

BLIND TOM has returned to New York from Europe, and will soon begin a musical tour.

Power of an Axe.

The other day I was holding a man by the hand—a hand as firm in its texture as leather, and his sunburnt face was as inflexible as parchment—he was pouring forth a tirade of contempt on those who complain that they get nothing to do, as an excuse for becoming idle loafers.

Said I, "Jeff what do you work at?" "Why," said he, "I bought an axe three years ago that cost me two dollars. That was all the money I had. I went to chopping wood by the cord. I have done nothing else, and have earned more than \$600, drank no grog paid no doctor, and have bought me a little farm in the Hoosier State, and shall be married next week to a girl who has earned \$200 since she was eighteen. My old axe I shall keep in the drawer, and buy me a new one to cut wood with."

After I left him I thought to myself, "that axe and no grog?" These are the things that make a man in the world. How small a capital that axe—how sure of success with the motto, "No grog." And then a farm and a wife the best of all.

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Victoria's Courtship.

Queen Victoria has written a book, or at least a good part of one, and carefully revised the remainder, on the early life of the late Prince Consort, in which there are some singularly frank and pleasant revelations of the inner life and heartwork of loyalty. We find two letters copied by the London correspondent of the New York Times which will be read with interest, and deepen the good will which is felt for the writers in the minds of all right minded people. The first is from Albert to his grand mother, apprising her that the matter between him and Victoria had been arranged.

"The subject which has occupied us so much of late is at last settled. The Queen sent for me alone in her room a few days ago, and declared to me in a genuine outburst to love and affection that I had gained her whole heart, and would make her intensely happy if I would make her the sacrifice of sharing my life with her, for she said she looked on it as a sacrifice; the only thing which troubled her was that she did not think she was worthy of me. The joyous openness of manner in which she told me this quite enchanted me, and I was quite carried away by it. She is really most good and amiable, and I am quite sure heaven has not given me into evil hands, and that we shall be happy together."

"Since that moment Victoria does whatever she fancies I should wish or like, and we talk together a great deal about our future life, which she promises me to make happy as possible. Oh, the future! does it not bring with it the moment when I shall have to take leave to my dear, dear home, and of you! I cannot think of that without deep melancholy taking possession of me. It was on the 15th of October that Victoria made me this declaration and I have hitherto shrunk from telling you; but how does delay make it better?"

"This is very charming, and quite in character with the—next, it is still better wherein Victoria tells her uncle, the King of Belgium, all about it:

WINDSOR CASTLE, Oct. 15, 1839.

MY DEAREST UNCLE:—This letter, will, I am sure, give you pleasure, for you have always shown and taken so warm an interest in all that concerns me. My mind is quite made up, and I told Albert this morning of it. The warm affection he showed me on learning this gave me great pleasure. He seems perfection, and I think that I have the prospect of very great happiness before me. I love him more than I can say, and shall do everything in my power to render this sacrifice (for such in my opinion it is) as small as I can. He seems to have great tact, a very necessary thing in his position. These last few days have passed like a dream to me, and I am so much bewildered by it all that I hardly know how to write; but I do feel very happy. It is absolutely necessary that this determination of mine should be known to no one but yourself and to Uncle Ernest until after the meeting of Parliament, as it would be considered, otherwise, neglectful on my part not to have assembled Parliament at once to inform them of it.

Lord Melbourne, whom I have of course consulted about the whole affair quite approves my choice, and expressed great satisfaction at this event, which he thinks in every way highly desirable.

Lord Melbourne has acted in this business as he has always done towards me, with the greatest kindness and affection. We also think it better, and Albert quite approves of it, that we should be married soon after Parliament meets, about the beginning of February.

Pray, dearest Uncle, forward these two letters to Uncle Ernest, to whom I beg you will enjoin strict secrecy, and explain these details which I have not time to do, and to faithful Stockmar. I think you might tell Louise of it, but none of her family.

I wish to keep the dear young gentleman here until the end of next month. Ernest's sincere pleasure gives me great delight. He does so adore dearest Albert. Ever dearest Uncle, your devoted niece.

V. R.

An Irish counsellor having lost his cause, which had been tried by three judges, one of whom was esteemed a very able lawyer though the other two was indifferent, some of the other barristers were merry on the occasion.

"Well now," said he, "who could help it, when there are a hundred judges on the bench?"

"A hundred!" said a bystander; "there were but three."

"By St. Patrick!" replied he, "there were one and two eighths."

Dew is an invisible vapor, which chilled by the cool surfaces of flowers bursts into tears over beauty that fades.

—Gen. Gilmore post master at Chicago was drowned on the 9th inst, in Lake Michigan.

—The woman who undertook to scour the woods, has abandoned the job, owing to the high price of soap. The best that was heard of her she was skinning the seas.

—There must be lovely lands somewhere starward, for none return that go thither, and we very much doubt if any would if they could.

—The woman who undertook to scour the woods, has abandoned the job, owing to the high price of soap. The best that was heard of her she was skinning the seas.

—Millions for de fence," as the nigger said when a wrathful steer chased him across the field.

—A sure cure for stammering, if you say it fast: "Theopolis Thistle the thistle sifter sifted a sifter full of unsifted thistles, and if Theopolis Thistle the thistle sifter sifted a sifter full of unsifted thistles where's the sifter full of sifted thistles that Theopolis Thistle the thistle sifter sifted."

—A man had received a large lot of lobsters, fresh and lively, when a boy stood looking at the critters, accompanied by his dog.

"Suppose you put your dog's tail between the lobster's claws," said the man.

"Agreed," said the boy.

The peg was extracted from the claws and the dog's tail inserted. Away went the dog off home, howling at the squeeze his tail got from the lobster.

"Whistle your dog back, you young scamp," said the man.

"Whistle your lobster back," cried the boy, and absquatulated. The boy had a lobster supper that night.

Be a Woman.

Oh I've heard a gentle mother, As the Twilight hours began, Pleading with a son on duty, Urging him to be a man. But unto her blue-eyed daughter, Though with love's words quite as ready, Points she out the other day— "Strive, my dear, to be a lady."

What's a lady? It is something Made of hoops, and silks, and airs; Used to decorate the parlor. Like the fancy rings and chairs? Is it one that wastes on no one's life Every feeling that is human? If 'tis this to be a lady, 'Tis not this to be a woman.

Mother, then, unto your daughter Speak of something higher far, Than to be mere fashion's lady— "Woman" is the brightest star. If ye, in your strong affection, Urge your son to be a true man, Urge your daughter no less strongly To arise and be a woman.

Yes, a woman! brightest model Of that high and perfect beauty. Where the mind, and soul, and body, Blend to work out life's great duty. Be a woman; naught is higher On the gilded list of fame; On the catalogue of virtue There's no brighter, holier name.

Be a woman! on to duty; Raise the world from all that's low, Place high in the social heaven Virtue's bright and radiant bow. Lend thy influence to each effort That shall raise our nature human; Be not fashion's gilded lady— Be a brave, whole-souled, true woman.

Latest from the Song Writers.

The man who 'Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls' has opened a marble quarry there and is doing a thriving business in getting out grave stones.

The author of 'Carry me back to Old Virginia' has opened a livery stable, and is carried back in his own conveyance whenever he wants to be.

The man who sang 'I am lonely since my Mother Died,' isn't quite so lonely now. The old man married again, and his step-mother makes it lively enough for him.

The author of 'Life on the Ocean Wave,' is gratifying his taste for the sea by tending a saw mill. He will be on the water now.

The one who gave the 'Old Folks at Home' to the world has recently taken them to the poor house, as they were getting troublesome.