

Letter from a Woman

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We may make new homes in countries across the azure sea, And the paths that know our footsteps In a fairer land may be; But though scenes of rarer beauty May our wistful eyes beguile— There'll be no home like the old home That we cherish all the while!

As we wander through the wide world, Seeking fortune, friends, and fame, Many lips will speak our name; But of all the kindly faces That for us will wear a smile, There'll be no friend like the old friend, That has loved us all the while!

Other hearts will learn to love us, Making sunshine on our way, Tender links of new affections Will enchain us day by day; But as onward still we journey, Growing wearier mile by mile, There'll be no love like the old love, That has loved us all the while.

A BARBERRY HEDGE.

The front porch of the Lord farmhouse faced the east. Therefore, at three o'clock on a Sunday afternoon in July, it lay in the cool shadow of the great white house. Seated among the gray cushions of the hammock was Patty Loyd, the only child and the heiress of the broad acres. Patty was a pretty dimpled blonde of twenty. In a soft, white lawn, with her chestnut hair curling away from her low brow, she made a charming picture.

The other occupants of the porch were John Manchester, the son of Richard Manchester, whose well-tilled fields joined Lord farm. He was tall, stalwart and dark, while his thoughtful face betokened a mind alert and cultured.

The air was heavy with the scent of the heliotrope growing on a flower-stand at John's right. The beds of geraniums and nasturtiums made glowing bits of color on the velvety green sward. In the branches of a great apple-tree a mother robin chirped drowsily to her brood. All was peaceful and free from discord.

But there was a serpent even in Eden. As Seth Loyd, the father of Patty, came strolling around the house, coatless and his face flushed with the heat, he bore little resemblance to the traditional temper of our common mother. Still, his entrance upon the scene was almost as fatal to peace and harmony.

Mr. Loyd sat down upon the steps, fanning himself with his straw hat. "How! Hot weather this, John!" "Yes, it's good for corn," John replied, affably. He did not particularly enjoy the society of Mr. Loyd, but he was Patty's father.

"Yes, but somehow it don't seem to bring on that air piece of yours over there," pointing off to the north, where a corn-field belonging to the Manchesters was in sight. "Poor lay for crop, that. What ails it? You progressive farmers don't seem to have very good crops after all your talk."

The hot blood colored John's cheeks. Mr. Loyd was always sneering at his son's father's farming. Perhaps it would be as well to speak out concerning the corn. In the young man's vexation he forgot that this disagreeable neighbor was the father of the pretty girl opposite.

"Oh," he said, defiantly, "that's plain enough. As long as that hedge of yours stands there we can't expect much of crops in the field next to it. Your own suffer some, but the wind favors you."

"Eh, what's that? What do you mean?" and the old man sat bolt upright and glared at John. "It must be your college learnin' has gone to your head."

This thrust did not quiet John. His attendance upon the state Agricultural College had before been ridiculed by Mr. Loyd.

"I don't think it has. It may have opened my eyes to the cause of what you are pleased to call our failures. You may not know, sir, that research has proven that the pollen of the barberry-bush is hurtful to many growing things. Professor Lutz touched on the subject while I was at college, and I have this summer corresponded with him about this very hedge. He assures me that it is a damage to my father's farm, and could be so proved in court. Botanists claim that this variety of the barberry, the *Berberis vulgaris*, is—"

Here a strange noise interrupted him. It was a cross between a snort and a growl. Only astonishment had kept Seth Loyd quiet thus far. The Latin words, however, restored his power of speech. He sprang to his feet with remarkable agility, considering his sixty-five years.

"You fool!" he shouted. "You blamed idiot! You never had any more brains than your father, and that air schoolin' has spiled 'em. It is a lie, every word of it."

John, too, arose. Before he could speak Patty's soft voice recalled him to himself.

"Oh, papa, how can you, and on Sunday, too! He don't mean it, John, I know he don't."

John hesitated. Yes, it was well, judgments to say the least, to anger Patty's father. He hit his lips and turned half apologetically to the old man, but the mischief was done.

"You keep still, miss," to Patty. "As for you, young man, you walk. Don't you never put foot on my farm again! Hedge hurt your corn! That hedge has always been an eyesore to my fa-

ther. I'll defend it, you scoundrel. Yes, sir, defend it with the last cent of my money and the last drop of my blood."

It was useless to attempt to reason with him. His rage increased. John was obliged to obey him and depart. He humbly asked Patty's pardon, and received assurance of her continued friendship, even while her father was ordering him never to speak to her again. John strode out of the gate and down the road, and Patty, her blue eyes overflowing with tears, took refuge in her own room.

Seth Loyd strode into the cool, quiet, old-fashioned sitting-room, where his wife was indulging in her Sunday afternoon nap. Mrs. Loyd was a meek little woman, who always managed to fan the flame of her husband's anger by her ill-timed efforts to extinguish it. When his story was told, she said, tearfully:

"Oh, Seth, I jest wouldn't. Like as not, the Manchesters will go to law, and how it would sound for folks to say you were arrested."

This only made matters worse. Mr. Loyd brought his hands together with a resounding slap, and shouted:

"I wish they'd try it. I'll show Dick Manchester who's got the most money, him or me!"

"Oh, father, don't talk so," and Mrs. Loyd wiped a tear from her cheek. "I moat know Patty likes John, and I wouldn't have our girl's heart hurt for all the hedges in the country."

This remark was the one thing needed to raise the passion of Seth Loyd to white heat. Notwithstanding his long trusteeship in the little church near by, he swore, with an awful oath, that Patty should have nothing to do with the Manchesters.

As for John, he acted unwisely. He went straight home, and finding his father lying under the great walnut-trees which shaded the lawn, he told him the whole story.

Richard Manchester was a much younger man than his neighbor. John was an only child, and the boy had been motherless since his birth, there was little his father had denied him. But as he listened, the face of the elder man grew hard and stern. This was not the first trouble between Seth Loyd and himself. Manchester's more progressive ways of farming had always been ridiculed by the old man, and more especially had this been the case in the last few years since these very ways had begun to bring in large returns. The hedge had already been a source of dispute, as it took the place of a line fence, and had, when small, often been passed over and trodden on by Manchester's cattle.

"I think I've stood enough from Seth Loyd," Mr. Manchester, senior, said, firmly. "I believe I'll test the matter of the hedge in the courts, although I am opposed, on general principles, to lawing. You kept Professor Lutz's letters, didn't you, John?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"But what?" the father asked, impatiently. "I hope old Loyd did not frighten you?"

"I don't think I am afraid," John answered, smiling a little. "But there's Patty."

"Patty? Oh, yes, I see. Well, John, I'll go a little blow for your sake, but Seth Loyd will never overlook what happened to-day."

Time proved the truth of Richard Manchester's words. Seth Loyd let no opportunity of annoying his neighbor go unimproved. Several times hot words passed between the two men.

John and Patty met at church and in various social ways. There was little chance for conversation, and John determined to see the girl alone and come to a definite understanding with her. Fortune soon favored him.

One sunny afternoon he was drilling wheat. As he turned his team he caught a glimpse of a trim little figure in dark blue strolling leisurely along the road only a few rods from him.

John tied his horse to a convenient tree, hurried across the field, leaped over the fence, and stood leaning against the trunk of a beech when Patty approached.

She started, but the look of joy in her eyes did not escape John's notice. "Come, Patty, and sit down here," he said, imperatively. "I must talk to you, and there's no telling when I can see you again."

Patty obeyed unquestioningly, and he took his place at her side. The sunlight peered down at them through the screen of silver-green leaves, bringing out glints of brightness in Patty's hair, and in the goldenrod in her lap, and a squirrel peeped to eye them curiously; but they heeded none of these. There, once more, the story of love was told, the story each retelling of which is the crown of some life.

"Yes, I love you, John," Patty said, her cheeks aglow, "but papa will never consent, and I dare not oppose him."

They talked for a long time. John wished to go straight to Seth Loyd and tell him of the engagement, but Patty would not consent.

"We must wait," she said. "Any more trouble would break mamma's heart. I don't know how it will come out, but John, I will always be true to you."

With this John was obliged to be content. Patty bade him a tearful farewell and went on her way. He sighed as he went back across the field. Surely it was hard that two young lives should be overshadowed by—yes, by a barberry hedge. John smiled and threw back his shoulders proudly. He would wait patiently for a time, but in the end Patty should be his wife.

The autumn wore away, and still the trouble about the hedge increased. Mr. Loyd was planning to set another barberry hedge between his farm and

Manchester's. When Richard Manchester learned this he consulted a lawyer, and the trouble was further from a peaceful settlement than ever.

On a frosty morning late in November Mr. Loyd started for the corn-field, which lay at the extreme back part of his large farm. He was not feeling well, so he hitched a horse to his cart and drove back along the lane until he reached the field where the huskers were busy. Hitching the horse to the fence, he went forward to inspect the work.

When Seth Loyd drove back along the lane he was in a bad humor. There was no use in closing his eyes to the fact—his farm was not doing as well as when he was able to personally give it his attention.

"Everything is going to ruin," he muttered, shivering as the raw wind smote his face. "If I jest had a son! Not but Patty's a girl any man might be proud of, but a boy would look after things for me. There, I believe the top's blowed plumb off of that stack of clover-seed. I told Collins it wasn't right, but you never see a hired man you can tell anything these days."

He drove his horse through the open gate and across the field in the direction of the stack. The young horse threw up her head impatiently at being turned aside from her way to the barn.

This field was the one separated from the Manchester farm by the disputed hedge. Seth Loyd glanced, complacently at the neatly trimmed shrubs. "Looks pretty well in spite of Dick Manchester's grumbling. I'll show him—hey, there, Topsy! What! Whoa, I say!"

A flock of his own turkeys had taken refuge under the barberry hedge. The patriarch of the flock, a huge bronze gobbler, advanced in front of the horse, his wings spread and his shrill voice raised.

Topsy shied. The angry voice of her master and the jerk of the lines added to her excitement. A moment later she was running wildly across the field, with Seth Loyd vainly pulling at the reins and shouting for help.

The old man was sorely frightened. Directly at the foot of the hill which Topsy was descending at breakneck speed was a narrow gully in which stones and refuse had been thrown. There the cart would be overturned. Certain death awaited him unless the horse was stopped.

She was stopped. A man leaped over the hedge, strong hands caught Topsy's bit, and John Manchester's voice bade Mr. Loyd dismount.

He did so, catching his foot and falling headlong. By the time he had regained his feet the men who had been working in the field with John had reached the spot. One of these held the horse by the head, the rest were gathered about a figure which lay prone upon the ground.

"Eh, who's the man?" Mr. Loyd asked, making his way forward.

"That brute of a horse has about killed John," one of the men said. "His arm is broken, besides that hurt on his head, and I don't know what else."

John Manchester opened his eyes, and supported by one of his companions, struggled to a sitting posture. Although suffering severe pain, he smiled faintly when he met the gaze of Seth Loyd.

"How you'll excuse my trespassing," he said, in a hoarse voice. "I really forgot under the excitement of the moment that you had forbidden my coming on your premises."

The words died away on his lips, and he sank back, pale and speechless. Seth Loyd's wrinkled face worked piteously as he turned to the group of men.

"He ain't dead, is he? Cause if he is, 'twas me and the barberry hedge that killed him."

It was late the next morning when John Manchester woke from a troubled sleep. The doctor had pronounced his injuries serious, but not dangerous. Some one was sitting close by his bed, and he slowly turned his aching head to see who it was.

"How are you feeling, dear?" and Patty bent over the pillow.

"You here, Patty! Oh, my darling, what does it mean?"

"Hush, you are not to talk. Papa sent me here to help take care of you. It's all right, John. He, he said," and the blushing face dropped low, "that you must get well enough for a wedding on Christmas. That ain't all, see, John," and she darted to the window and raised the shade.

The barberry hedge was in plain sight. John saw the teams and hired men of Mr. Loyd hard at work pulling up the shrubs by the roots.

"Papa said to tell you and your father that the barberry hedge and the trouble it made were things of the past," Patty said, slipping her soft hand into that of her lover.

Administrator's Notice.

Letters of administration having been granted to the undersigned, upon the estate of Edward Gumbie, Sr., of the township of Palmyra, of the County of Pike all persons having claims against said estate will present them, and those indebted to said deceased will please make immediate payment to

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