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**"CROPPY'S" STORY.**

A WINTER'S TALE

A cold and cheerless night without,  
A cheerful fire within;  
The croonings of the Good Queen Housie  
(An unpretentious inn)  
Had gathered 'round a fine turf fire,  
Its crimson blazing glow  
Diffused its light and heat inside  
While outside fell the snow.

"'Tis your turn 'Croppy' said old Tim  
As he lit his white clay pipe  
'To tell a yarn or sing a song.'  
'Croppy with his hand did wipe  
His head by way of preface, then  
Crossed his leg over knee  
And thus his story he began  
All listened attentively.

'Fifty years ago' said he  
I was then but a lad;  
It was a dreadful stormy night,  
The worst we'd ever had,  
We were sitting as to-night  
Beside a fire like this,  
Father, mother, uncle Jack,  
Myself and sister Sis.

We were listening to sea faring tales,  
Uncle Jack was telling, when  
We heard tapping at the window pane,  
'Who is that?' was asked; again,  
Three taps in quick succession came,  
Father opened the front door,  
A poor benighted stranger stood  
Before us on the floor.

He was but poorly clad, his feet  
And hands from cold were numb;  
He pointed to his moth, we saw  
That the poor man was dumb,  
Mother gave him food and drink and then  
She made a bed of hay  
In the corner of the room  
And there the poor man lay.

We soon retired, a fervent prayer  
To God my father said,  
'Oh help the outcasts and the poor  
And give them their daily bread.'  
That night we very soundly slept  
Until the dawn of day.  
When father 'woke he looked and saw  
The stranger'd gone away.

The croonings all stopped smoking now,  
'Well, well, said husky Tim,  
But what became of him?  
'Croppy' shook his head, "Oh, no,"  
Said he "My father found  
A letter he had left to him  
It was laying on the ground.

"What did it say?" asked Siddle Brown  
"Be quiet," said red Phil  
"Go on" said dusky Dan—"relate"  
"I will if you'll be still."  
Then Croppy placed his other leg  
Across his other knee,  
And read the letter word for word  
Read it from memory.

"I am the hunted bound they sought  
O'er thirty years ago;  
'Twas I that killed young Ronald Blair,  
I felled him with one blow  
And left him on the bridge, then fled,  
I did not mean to kill,  
God knows I did not, we both loved  
The same fair, Lucille.

I took his lifeless hand in mine  
I wept and vowed to heaven,  
That for my sin I would atone  
And prayed to be forgiven,  
I made a rash vow so I knelt  
That a wanderer I'd roam  
And my tongue would never speak again  
Since then I have been dumb.

"Croppy" paused a moment, then  
With faltering voice, he said:  
'Poor old man he paid the price  
Next day he was found dead  
In Lucille's barn a mile away.'  
'Well told," said Simon Bower,  
The croonings parted it was then  
Night to the midnight hour.

CECILIA A. COLLE.

**FREE AND EASY.**

How They Play Ready Jobs in the Pacific Coast Metropolis.

"There is probably no city in the world where all classes meet on such free and easy terms as San Francisco, a social state of affairs which has probably descended from the old mining days, and this haphazard equality is seldom appreciated by the British tourist, who passes through here, on his cut-and-dried, tour round the world."

**Japan Lost Trade.**  
In 1908 purchases of Japanese porcelain, lacquers and bronzes by England, France, Germany and the United States decreased by \$1,000,000. Exports to China fell off \$12,500,000 generally, owing to the reduced value of silver and the Taishu Maru boycott. All exports decreased except mats, floor matting and refined sugar.

**Lamps Injurious to Health.**  
In a recent lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Arts, Leon Gaspar advanced the opinion that ultraviolet rays from indoor electric lamps are injurious to health. He advised the use of bulbs which will obstruct these rays.

**A Thoughtful Girl.**  
Probably the most thoughtful daughter in the world lives in Aitchison. Although 25 years of age, she still wears her hair down her back to keep her mother looking young.—Aitchison Globe.

**BY COMMAND OF MRS. MAC**

"Jimmie, take Sadie out and get her something to eat," commanded the energetic little Mrs. MacPherson. "The poor child has been so busy helping us that she didn't even have her lunch."

Sadie stared blankly into Falkman's eyes, as Mrs. MacPherson hurried away. Of course, Mrs. MacPherson could not be expected to know that this engagement had been broken the night before, but it was decidedly embarrassing to be placed in charge of a man who only 18 hours since she had dismissed with an incoherent statement of the fact that she never wished to see him again.

"What Mrs. Mac says goes," reminded Falkman, laughing. "I know that you'd rather not, but I never would dare look Mrs. Mac in the face again if I had disobeyed one of her commands."

"Your devotion to Mrs. MacPherson is touching," was the girl's sarcastic reply. "Being more brave, I will take upon myself the liberty of releasing you from the unsought obligation."

"Be warned in time," urged Falkman. "Shall we mere mortals seek to overthrow the imperial dictator of the kindly little lady who so obligingly runs this small world of ours? Remember the fate of Mrs. Bisell, and be warned."

Sadie Arnold smiled in spite of herself. Mrs. Bisell's discomfiture was so recent that all their set were still laughing over the defeat of the woman who had sought to wrest social supremacy from Mrs. MacPherson and who had been forced to beat an inglorious retreat.

Falkman took advantage of the smile to gently touch her arm and guide her through the door into the room where a buffet lunch was being served. Dubiously he regarded the crush around the tables.

"I confess that my courage fails me," he announced.

"And you a football captain!" said Sadie, with a scornful smile.

"That's different," was the prompt reply.

"And your fear of Mrs. Mac is—" began Sadie, Jimmie held up a warning hand.

"My fear of Mrs. Mac is as strong as ever," he declared, "which leads me to the second part of this proposition. Mrs. Mac did not say to feed you. I know a splendid tearoom only a couple of blocks away. A cup of tea and some toasted muffins will be better for you than the salad that served for Mrs. Ridgway's reception last night, and Mrs. Bonnell's musical breakfast yesterday afternoon. The same caterer I know supplied all three."

"With the same salad?" asked Sadie, with a laugh.

"They make it by the ton," he declared. "Let's slip out and have a comforting cup of tea in peace."

For a moment Sadie wavered, but Falkman's suggestion won. All the forenoon she had assisted to prepare for the opening of the season. Then had come the matinee rush of patrons and for hours she had suffered the torment of a headache in a babel of small talk and sharp bargaining. The quiet of the tearoom would be very refreshing. Falkman read her aspect in her eyes and hurried her away from the crowded room where men fought for the refreshments for which they had paid liberally in purchases at the booths.

"This is nice," assented Sadie, half an hour later, as her cup was replenished a second time and a fresh supply of muffins was brought. "I'm glad you thought of it, Jimmie."

The name had slipped out before she realized it. In the relaxation of comfort and quiet she had forgotten for the moment the quarrel of the night before.

Falkman wisely ignored the slip as he nodded assent. He was beyond his years in the ways of woman, and no glowing exclamation added to her confusion.

"I am very grateful to Mrs. Mac for turning me over to your thoughtful care," announced Sadie to reward him for his action. "This is so much better than that tiresome crowd. My head is better already."

"You had no lunch," he reminded.

"I'm always headachy when I'm hungry. That and the rest must combine will do the work. Have some more of these preserves."

At last, after all was over, Sadie reluctantly rose from the table, he walked down the avenue with her, still conversing upon safe and impersonal topics.

The soft spring air completed Sadie's course and as she paused before the steps leading to her home she held out her hand.

"You have something of mine I gave you last night," she said. "May I have it, please?"

With a look that spoke volumes, he drew the ring from his pocket and placed it on her finger. "It was a brute last night," he said softly. "I'll try not to offend again, dear."

"I want you to be a brave sometimes," declared Sadie with a little laugh. "You've been so good."

Will you take me back to the bazaar this evening?"

"And report to Mrs. Mac?" amended Falkman. "Bless that woman."

Sadie's glance was a caress, as she echoed his words, and held out her hand in farewell. Mrs. Mac had given him the chance, but Jimmie had done the rest by doing nothing.

Looking Out for Grandma.

They are considerate youngsters in Nottingham, as most people know, says London TRIBUNE. A little boy whose grandmother had just died wrote the following letter, which he duly posted:

"Dear Angels—We have sent you grandma. Please give her a harp to play, as she is short-winded and can't blow a trumpet."

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Fancy lawns 7c to 18c per yard  
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Also a complete line of Notions, Groceries, Crockery.

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