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For The Bloomfield Times.

AFFAIRS D'AMOUR.

"STUTTGART."

Love your sweetheart as yourself,
Thus all lovers teacheth,
To own one another's hearts, it is that
For which they often prayeth.

She who with cap, whip and gloves,
In the bright morning hours,
Rides along merrily here and there,
Looking as sweet as Spring flowers.

Love your sweetheart as yourself,
Winsome, black-eyed Mary,
Roe cheeks and dark brown hair,
Dimpled, pink and pearly.

Of't I have wondered deep in my heart,
Is she but an intriguer,
And then again I said to myself,
No, no, I'm but a "fatiguer."

Love your sweetheart as yourself,
How devoted I'm growing,
All my heart with fervent love,
Toward my sweetheart flowing.

If she would but love me a little, you
know,
And this of't prayed for news impart,
How much better than myself, I'm sure,
I would gladly love my sweetheart.

MRS. COBB'S FIRST LOVE.

THE fire crackled cheerily on the broad hearth of the old farm-house kitchen, a cat and three kittens basked in the warmth, and a decrepid yellow dog, lying full in the reflection of the blaze, wrinkled his black nose approvingly, as he turned his hind feet where his fore feet had been.

Over the chimney hung several fine hams and pieces of dried beef. Apples were festooned along the ceiling, and crooked-necked squashes vied with red peppers and slips of dried pumpkin in garnishing each window frame. There were plants, too, on the window ledges—horse shoe geraniums and dew plants, and a monthly rose, just budding, to say nothing of pots of violets that perfumed the whole place whenever they took into their heads to bloom.

The floor was carefully swept, the chairs had not a speck of dust upon leg or round, the long settee near the fireplace shone as if it had just been varnished, and the eight-day clock in the corner had its white face newly washed, and seemed determined to tick the louder for it. Two arm chairs were drawn up at a cosy distance from the hearth and each other; a candle, a newspaper, a pair of spectacles, a dish of red-cheeked apples and a pitcher of cider, filled a little table between them.

In one of the chairs sat a comfortable looking woman of about forty-five, with cheeks as red as apples, and eyes as dark and bright as they had ever been, resting her elbow on the table, and her head upon her hand, and looked thoughtfully into the fire. This was the widow Cobb—"relict" of Deacon Levi Cobb, who had been mouldering in the dust in the Bytown churchyard for more than seven years. She was thinking of her dead husband, probably because—her work being done, and the servant gone to bed—the sight of his empty chair at the other side of the table, and the silence of the room, made her a little lonely.

"Seven years!" so the widow's reverie ran. "It seems as if 'twas more than fifty—and yet I don't look so very old either. Perhaps it's not having any children to bother my life out, as other people have. They may say what they like, children are more plague than profit—that's my opinion. Look at my sister Jerusha with her six boys. She's worn to a shadow—and I'm sure they have

done it, though she will never own it."

The widow took an apple from the dish and began to peel it.

"How dreadful fond Mr. Cobb used to be of these grafts. He never will eat any more of them, poor fellow, for I don't suppose they have apples where he's gone to. Heigho! I remember very well how I used to throw apple parings over my head when I was a girl, to see who I was going to marry."

Mrs. Cobb stopped short and blushed. In those days she did not know Mr. Cobb, and was always looking eagerly to see if the peel had formed a capital S. Her meditations took a new turn.

"How handsome Sam Payson was, and how much I used to care for him.—Jerusha says he went away from our village just after I did, and no one has heard of him since. And what a silly thing that quarrel was! If it had not been for that—"

Here came a long pause, during which the widow looked very steadfastly at the empty chair of Mr. Levi Cobb, deceased. Her fingers played carelessly with the apple-paring; she drew it safely toward her, and looked around the room.

"Upon my word it is very ridiculous, and I don't know what the neighbors would say if they saw me."

Still the plump fingers drew the peel nearer.

"But they can't see me—that's a comfort—and the cat and old Bowse will never know what it means. Of course I don't believe anything about it."

The paring hung gracefully from her hand.

"But still I should like to try: it would seem like old times, and—"

Over head it went, and curled up quietly on the floor at a little distance; and Bowse, who always slept with one eye open, saw it fall, and marched deliberately up to smell it.

"Bowse, Bowse, don't touch it!" cried his mistress; and bending over it with a beating heart she turned as red as fire. There was as handsome a capital S as one could wish to see.

A loud knock came suddenly at the door. The dog growled, and the widow screamed and snatched up the apple paring.

"It's Mr. Cobb; it's his spirit come back again because I tried that silly trick," she thought fearfully to herself.

Another knock, louder than the first, and a man's voice exclaimed:

"Hillo, the house!"

"Who is it?" asked the widow, somewhat relieved to find that the departed Levi was still safe in his grave up on the hill side.

"A stranger," said the voice.

"What do you want?"

"To get lodgings here for the night."

The widow deliberated.

"Can't you go on? There's a house half a mile further on, if you keep to the right hand side of the road, and turn to the left after you get by—"

"It's raining cats and dogs, and I'm very delicate," said the stranger coughing. "I'm wet to the skin. Don't you think you can accommodate me? I don't mind sleeping on the floor."

"Raining, is it? I didn't know that," and the kind-hearted little woman unbarred the door very quickly. "Come in, whoever you may be. I only asked you to go on because I am a lone woman with only one servant in the house."

The stranger entered, shaking himself like a Newfoundland dog upon the step, and scattering a little shower of drops over his hostess and her nicely swept floor.

"Ah, that looks comfortable after a man has been out for hours in a storm," he said as he caught sight of the fire, and striding along toward the hearth, followed by Bowse, who snuffed suspiciously at his heels, he stationed himself in the arm chair—Mr. Cobb's arm chair—which had been "sacred to his memory for seven years."

The widow was horrified, but her guest was so weary and wornout that she could not ask him to move, but busied herself in stirring up the blaze, that he might the sooner dry his dripping garments. A new thought struck her.—Cobb had worn a comfortable dressing gown during his illness, which still hung in the closet at her right. She could not let this poor man catch his death by sitting in that wet coat. If he was in Mr. Cobb's chair why should he

not be in Mr. Cobb's wrapper? She went nimbly to the closet, took it down, fished out a pair of slippers from the boot rack below, and brought them to him.

"I think you had better take off your coat and boots; you will have the rheumatic fever, or something like it, if you don't. Here are some things for you to wear while those are drying. And you must be hungry, too. I will go into the pantry and get you something to eat."

She bustled away, "on hospitable thoughts intent," and the stranger made the exchange with a quizzical smile playing around his lips. He was a tall, well-formed man, with a bold but handsome face, sunburned and heavily bearded, and looking anything but delicate, though his blue eyes glanced out from a forehead as white as snow. He looked around the kitchen with a mischievous air, stretched out his feet before him, decorated with the defunct deacon's slippers.

"Upon my word, this is stepping into the old man's shoes with a vengeance! And what a hearty, good-humored looking woman she is, kind as a kitten;" and then patted old Bowse upon the head. The widow, bringing in sundry good things, looked pleased at his attention to her dumb friend.

"It's a wonder Bowse does not growl. He generally does when strangers touch him. Dear me, how stupid!"

This last remark was addressed neither to the stranger nor to the dog, but to herself. She had forgotten that the little stand was not empty, and there was no room on it for the things she held.

"Oh, I'll manage that," said her guest, gathering up paper, candle, apples and spectacles—it was not without a little pang that she saw them in his hand, for they had been the deacon's, and were placed each night, like the arm chair—and depositing them on the settee. "Give me the table cloth, ma'am—I've learned that, along with a score of other things, in my wanderings.—Now let me relieve you of those dishes; they are too heavy for those little hands"—the widow blushed—and now please sit down with me or I cannot eat a morsel."

"I had supper long ago, but really I think I can take something more," said Mrs. Cobb, drawing her chair near the table.

"Of course you can, my dear lady.—In this cold, autumn weather, people ought to eat twice as much as they do in warm. Let me give you a piece of this ham—your own curing, I dare say?"

"Yes, my poor husband was very fond of it. He used to say that no one understood curing hams and drying beef better than I did."

"He was a most sensible man, I am sure. I will drink to your health, madam, in this elder."

He took one long draught and sat down his glass.

"It is like nectar."

The widow was feeding Bowse and the cat (who thought they were entitled to a share of every meal ate in the house) and did not quite hear what he said. I fancy she would hardly have known what "nectar" was, so it was quite as well.

"Fine dog, madam, and very pretty cat."

"They were my husband's favorites," and a sigh followed.

"Ah, your husband must have been a very happy man."

The blue eyes looked at her so long she grew flurried.

"Is there anything more I can get for you, sir?" she said at last.

"Nothing, thank you; I have finished."

She rose to clear the things away. He assisted her, and somehow their hands had a queer nack of touching as they carried the dishes to the pantry shelves. Coming back to the kitchen, she put the apples and cider in their places, and brought out a clean pipe and a box of tobacco from an arched recess near the chimney.

"My husband always said he could not sleep after eating supper late unless he smoked," she said. "Perhaps you would like to try it."

"Not if it is going to drive you away," he answered; for she had a candle in her hand.

"Oh, no, I do not object to smoke at

all." She put the candle down—some faint suggestion about "propriety" troubled her. She glanced at the old clock and felt reassured; it was only half past nine.

The stranger pushed the stand back, after the pipe was lit, and drew her easy chair a little nearer the fire—and his own.

"Come, sit down," he said, pleadingly. "It is not late; and when a man has been knocked about in California and all sorts of places for a score of years, he is glad enough to get into a berth like this, and to have a pretty woman to speak to again."

"California! have you been to California?" she exclaimed, dropping into the chair. Unconsciously, she had long cherished the idea that Sam Payson—the lover of her youth—with whom she had foolishly quarreled, had pitched his tent, after many wanderings in that far-off land. Her heart warmed to one who with something of Sam's looks and ways about him, had also been sojourning in that country, very possibly had met him—perhaps had known him intimately. At that moment her heart beat quick, and she looked very graciously at the bearded stranger, who, wrapped in Mr. Cobb's dressing gown, wearing Mr. Cobb's slippers, and sitting in Mr. Cobb's chair, beside Mr. Cobb's wife, smoking Mr. Cobb's pipe, with such an air of feeling thoroughly and comfortably at home.

"Yes, ma'am, I've been in California for six years. And before that I went quite round the world in a whaling ship."

"Good gracious!" The stranger sent a puff of smoke curling gracefully over his head.

"It's very strange, my dear lady, how often you see one thing as you go wandering about the world after that fashion."

"And what is it?"

"Men without house or home above their heads, roving here and there, and turning up in all sorts of odd places—caring very little for life, as a general thing, and making fortunes just to fling them away again—and all for one reason. You don't ask what that is? No doubt you know already very well."

"I think not, sir."

"Because a woman has jilted them." Here was a long pause, and Mr. Cobb's pipe emitted short puffs with surprising rapidity. A guilty conscience needs no accuser; the widow's cheeks were dyed with blushes at the thought of the absent Sam.

"I wonder how women manage when they are served the same way," said the stranger musingly. "You never meet them roaming up and down in that style."

"No," said Mrs. Cobb, with some spirit, "if a woman is in trouble she must stay at home and bear it in the best way she can. And there's more women bearing such things than we know of, I dare say."

"Like enough. We never know whose hand gets pinched in a trap unless they scream. And women are too shy, or too sensible—which you choose—for that."

"Did you ever, in all your wanderings, meet any one by the name of Sam Payson?" asked the widow, unconcernedly.

The stranger looked towards her—she was rummaging at the table drawer for her knitting work, and did not notice him. When it was found and the needles in motion, he answered her.

"Payson? Sam Payson? Why, he was my most intimate friend. Do you know him?"

"A little—that is—I used to, when I was a girl. Where did you meet him?"

"He went with me on the whaling voyage I told you of—and afterwards to California. We had a tent together and some other fellows with us, and we dug in the same claim for more than six months."

"I suppose he was quite well?"

"As strong as an ox my dear lady."

"And—and happy?" pursued the widow, bending over her knitting.

"Hum—the less said about that the better, perhaps. But he seemed to enjoy life after a fashion of his own. And he got rich out there, or rather I will say, well off."

Mrs. Cobb did not pay much attention to that part of the story. Evidently she had not finished asking questions. But

she was puzzled about her next one. At last she brought it out beautifully.

"Was his wife with him in California?"

"His wife, ma'am? Why, bless you, he has not got one."

"Oh, I thought—I meant—I heard—" here the little widow remembered the fate of Ananias and Sapphira and stopped short before she told such a tremendous fib.

"Whatever you heard of his marrying was all nonsense, I can assure you. I know him well, and he had no thought of the kind about him. Some of the boys began to tease him about it, but he soon made them stop."

"How?"

"He just told them frankly, that the only woman he ever loved, jilted him years ago, and married another man.—After that no one ever mentioned the subject to him again, except me."

Mrs. Cobb laid her knitting aside, and looked thoughtfully into the fire.

"He was another specimen of the class of men I was speaking of. I have seen him face death a score of times as quietly as I face the fire. 'It matters very little who takes me off,' he used to say; 'I've nothing to live for, and there is no one to shed a tear for me when I'm gone.' It's a sad thought for a man to have, isn't it?"

Mrs. Cobb sighed as she said she thought it was.

"But did he ever tell you the name of the lady who jilted him?"

"I knew her first name."

"What was it?"

"Maria."

The plump little widow almost started out of her chair; her name was spoken exactly as Sam would have said it.

"Did you know her too?" he asked, looking keenly at her.

"Yes."

"Intimately?"

"Yes."

"And where is she now? Still happy with her husband, I suppose, and never giving a thought to the poor fellow she drove out into the world?"

"No," said Mrs. Cobb, shading her face with her hand, and speaking unsteadily. "No, her husband is dead."

"Ah! But still she never thinks of Sam?"

"There was a dead silence."

"Does she?"

"How can I tell?"

"Are you still friends?"

"Yes."

"Then you ought to know and you do. Tell me."

"I am sure I don't know why I should. But if I do you must promise me, on your honor, never to tell him, if you ever happen to meet him again."

"Madam, what you say to me never shall be repeated to any mortal man, upon my honor."

"Well, then, she does remember him."

"But how?"

"As kindly, I think, as he could wish."

"I am glad to hear it for his sake.—You and I are the friends of both parties; we can rejoice with each other."

He drew his chair much nearer her's, and took her hand. One moment the widow resisted, but it was a magnetic touch; the rosy palm lay quietly in his, and the dark beard bent so low that it nearly touched her shoulder. It did not matter much. Was he not Sam's dear friend? If he was not the rose, had he not dwelt very near it for a long, long time?

"It was a foolish quarrel that parted them," said the stranger.

"Did he tell you about it?"

"Yes, on the whaler."

"Did he blame her much?"

"Not as much as himself. He said that his jealousy and ill-temper drove her to break off the match; but he thought sometimes if he had only gone back and spoken kindly to her she would have married him after all."

"I am sure she would," said the widow, piteously. "She has owned it to me more than a hundred times."

"She was not happy, then, with another?"

"Mr. —, that was to say, her husband—was very good and kind," said the woman, thinking of the lonely grave on the hillside, rather penitently, "and they lived pleasantly together. There never was a harsh word between them."

"Still, might she not have been hap-