

AFTER TEN YEARS,

OR SIGNING THE CENSUS PAPER.

By Mary Bradford Whiting.

My wife and I together sit, The pen beside me lies, Upon the census sheet are fixed The children's curious eyes; And o'er my heart and brain there rolls A flood of memories.

Ten years since last I filled it up— What changes they have wrought! Small wonder that I pause awhile, And lose myself in thought Of all the mingling joy and pain These circling years have brought!

First comes my names: a greater strength Was mine ten years ago— Upon the hair that once was black There lies a touch of snow; I'm ten steps nearer to the goal To which we all must go.

Then comes the name of her I love: Through shadow and through shine, Through all the changes of the year, Our hearts still more entwined; Ah! God be thanked that I can still Write down that name with mine!

Willie, my boy, ten years ago A puny mite of five— How little, then, I thought to see You here to-day alive! Some joys I've lost, but this I have: To watch you grow and thrive.

Nelly, my sunbeam, how your smiles Have brightened all my way Since first I wrote your name and age Upon this self-same day, While in your mother's loving arms An hour-old babe you lay!

Annie, another home is yours; But, though we miss your face, I cannot feel an unmixed grief Before that vacant space, For in your husband's love and care You've found a resting place.

But as I lay the pen aside The mother looks at me, And points her trembling finger where Our Charlie's name should be, While in her sorrow-laden eyes The blinding tears I see.

Charlie, my dearest and my best, Beneath the sun-scorched sod Of that far distant Transvaal plain That once you bravely trod You lie and slumber, and your soul Is with your country's God.

And when the next ten years have passed, Upon another shore Perhaps my God will grant to me To see my boy once more, And in that first sweet glance forget The grief that came before.

Who knows? The future none can see: But though his course is run I thank the God who gave to me A hero for a son, And pray that, when we die, our work May all, like his, be done.

And though our paths go left or right As on through life we move, Or though we live, or though we die, We all are one in love; And on that last great Numb'ring Day We'll meet again above.

UNDER THE TRAIN.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"It is no use, mother, not a bit of use to try. You might as well attempt to catch and chain the wind in its wildest course, as to stay Abner Markley in his. Better let him alone."

"Don't talk so, husband. I must, indeed I must. His mother would have tried to save my boy, in the same situation, I know. It may be as you say, but I'll try all the same; and if I fail—no, no, I must not fail; I can't bear to use that word. Well, I'll do my duty, and trust to God for the result," answered Ruth Mild, as she wiped away the tears that stole gently down her sweet motherly face.

"You don't think of the danger to our own boy. If you bring him here, Ruth, God only knows where it might end. You forget." And Abel Mild glanced with an anxious eye through the open door into the next room, where sat a little maiden, the miniature picture of her mother—fairer and fresher in coloring though.

"Oh, Abel! that child, little more than a baby!" "In her sixteenth year, and he handsome enough to make a girl forget mother, father, and the whole world, for him. Don't do it, mother. It is a hereditary sin, from father to son. Would you see your child the wife of a drunkard?"

A shiver, a little cry of terror, and for a moment the sweet face paled. She hesitated, and Abel Mild thought he had triumphed.

"No. God will spare me that, I trust—I know. And so I will trust Him—aye, even though He slay me."

"And offer your own lamb to the sacrifice!" Abel said in a tone that told the dark forebodings that possessed his spirit. Again she faltered, and leant, with her head buried in her hands, as if praying. Again her eyes were looking into Abel's, clear, and showing no doubts in her heart.

"He knoweth my heart—its weakness and its strength. He will not try me beyond my power to bear. If you love me, Abel, say no more. Never before, in the twenty years of our married life, have I murmured against your will. Now I feel that I am doing His," she said, raising her eyes upward.

There was an expression on her face more beautiful than Abel had ever seen, even in those days when he thought there was not as lovely a face in the world—an

expression so holy, so trusting, that Abel went up to her, drew her head on his bosom, and kissing her, said:

"May He you trust bless and reward you, Ruth, my dear, good little wife. Forget what I've said, and go your way, which has ever been the right one."

"Thank you, Abel. You have made me happier. And now I will go. He leaves his office at three o'clock, dines at four, if I start now, I will be there just the right time. He will have finished, and be in his room."

Abner Markley, as Abel Mild had said, was handsome enough to win the heart of any woman. He was sitting in his room, as Ruth hoped to find him. And when he jumped up to welcome her, she thought of her husband's words.

"What an unexpected pleasure, Mrs. Mild!" he said, placing her in the comfortable chair from which he had just arisen.

"Yes! I'm glad to find you disengaged. I have another pleasure awaiting you. See! Looking over my treasures I found this, and have brought it for you—to give you, if you wish."

She held toward him a little velvet case which he hastened to take and open.

Ruth Mild anxiously watched his face while he gazed on the miniature he held. "My mother! Is it? Yes, I know it! Oh, thank you, my dear Mrs. Mild. How very, very beautiful! But I cannot remember her thus. Here her eyes are so laughing, her lips ready to break into smiles. I'm glad to have this to look at; for always, when thinking of her, I can only call up a face, beautiful enough, but oh! sad, so very sad! her eyes looking as though they had shed oceans of tears. And she once looked like this?"

"Yes, my boy. She sat for that in her wedding dress, a week before she became your father's wife. I was her bridesmaid. She was the merriest girl in the village when your father won her from us; and carried her off to the city to live."

"Mrs. Mild"—he turned his eyes from the beautiful picture to hers, and asked—"what changed my mother so terribly? Was my father not kind?"

She hesitated. "Tell me—all. I remember nothing of father. I have been told I was only five years old when he died. Was it his death—"

"No, no; but—"

"Speak freely, Mrs. Mild."

"May I? Well, it was the manner of your father's death which broke her heart; but it had been terribly wounded before, Abner. She was a drunkard's wife."

The good woman's voice had sunk so low he had to lean forward to catch the words, and then started back with a wounded cry, which caused her to say:

"I've hurt you. Forgive me."

"Yes, yes. But go on. Tell me all. Say it as you choose," he said, sinking back into his chair, and covering his face with one hand, the other still holding his mother's picture.

She talked on, picturing to him in graphic colors the young bride leaving them, so happy, so trusting; of the first surprise and mortification; the dreadful fears when she was no longer surprised; then the suffering all alone—she could confide that sorrow to none; of hope entering her heart again when she watched for the "little one's coming."

The reformation which brought for a brief time such holy happiness, as over the little one's—the baby boy's—cradle she stood with him she trusted in again—again to be disappointed. On and on to the violent death she told him, and then Ruth Mild pleaded as only a mother can plead. And when she finished by saying:

"Yes, my boy, the last time we met, she held you in her arms, and pressing her pale lips to yours, she said:

"Oh, Ruth, if I could take my darling with me, I would gladly, gladly close my eyes to earth! But if I leave him, shall I ever find him again? Will he come?—Oh God, will my boy come to me up there?"

Ruth Mild's voice was trembling, scarcely audible, as she repeated the dying mother's words.

Abner's bosom was convulsed with emotion. He did not try to conceal it as he sobbed forth: "Yes, yes, mother, with God's help I will come to you."

Ruth Mild had conquered. Abner Markley became one of her household. In every way she endeavored to hold him firm. Little Alice, with her dove-like eyes, was a source of deep and pure pleasure to the young man. She was so different from every other girl he knew—so gentle, so artless and childlike. Hours that used to be spent in drinking and club-rooms were passed reading to her, telling of the wonders of the old world, over which he had travelled, or in singing with her.

Those were happy evenings to all. Father Mild forgot his fears, as he watched the young folks and listened to the beautiful music they made—Alice at the piano, Abner with his flute, and the old man's second self, young Abel, with his violin. A year passed thus, bringing Abner, as he felt, nearer to mother. The tongues of many with their dark predictions had ceased, and those who had trusted pronounced Abner Markley saved.

"I wish I could excuse myself from this

party to-night," Abner said. And little Allie asked:

"Must you go?" "I think so. I did not intend to. I'd made up my mind to send an excuse, but the Judge came into my room this afternoon and insisted. You know he is our chief, and it is a respect due him to accept his invitation; but I will not stay long. There are some pretty wild fellows going—determined to have a 'time,' as they say; but I'll slip from them, and hasten back home to you, my little dove-eyed darling Allie here. Sit up for me; I have something to tell you, and something to beg for," he whispered. And then, as she stood in the door, he said:

"There, run in out of the cold. I must be more careful of you. Stop a moment. Kiss me, Allie?"

She drew back. He knew that her cheeks were crimsoned, although it was too dark to see.

"Mother will not care; kiss me darling. I will tell her all to-morrow. Thank you. Now run in," he said.

And she darted off to shed a few happy tears, and watch and wait for his coming.

"God bless her! I wonder if mother is watching over us to-night? I wish she were alive, to know my darling," Abner said, as the door closed on Allie's retreating form.

It was a brilliant throng that gathered in the saloon of Judge Armstead. Abner Markley was a universal favorite, and all welcomed him warmly.

That party was decidedly the party of the season. The music grand, the supper a perfect success. How the wine sparkled! And some of the women's eyes brightened, I'm sorry to tell, as they sipped the tempting glass.

Abner Markley forgot for the time the dove-like eyes of Allie, as he looked into the bright, flashing black ones of a girl whose influence he had known before. And when she held to him a glass of champagne, saying:

"How can you resist? take it," he replied.

"I could resist the wine, but not you." And taking it from her, drained the glass—another and another.

The hours passed on. Allie watched and waited.

Not until he had placed his tempter in her carriage did Abner start for home, and then he had his senses sufficient to know he could not return to Allie as he was.

In the gray light of morning, when little Allie, weary with watching, had fallen asleep with her pale face against the window, there came a slow, heavy tread along the pavement. The door bell aroused her from a frightful dream. She started, confused and terrified, to listen.

Strange voices reached her ear, talking in awed tones. She sped on to the passage to catch the words,

"Found dead on the track." Down the steps, with a wild cry, and beside the bier she fell; her arms clasped about the dead—her dead—she cried:

"No, no, not dead! Abner, speak to Allie, your Allie. See; I've waited for you as you bade me. Abner! Abner!—Father, has he fainted?" turning her face, with an appealing look, toward her father, who, shaking his head sorrowfully, tried to take her away.

"Dead!" she cried, in a tone that brought the tears to the rough men's eyes, and they turned off as Abel Mild lifted his child away and placed her in her mother's arms.

"I do wish we had not had wines last night," said Mrs. Armstead the next morning, while sipping her coffee.

"Why not?" asked her husband.

"Why, did you not notice young Markley used considerable, and felt the effects too? You know he had given it up for a year. You remember I suggested we should dispense with it."

"Nonsense! Give up a social custom for the sake of one fellow who is too weak to resist! I shall never do it."

"Mother!" exclaimed Fred Armstead, rushing in—"Mother, Abner Markley is dead!—found dead across the railroad track. Concussion of the brain, they say."

Concussion of the brain, they say! Can that decision of the physicians bring relief to the conscience of those who placed the wine before him, or of hers who held it to his lips? It could not to mine. There would be a constant, endless whisper of "murdered" in my ear, sinking to the very depth of my heart. I would sooner be the stricken little Allie, or Abner, cold and dead, than be either of the hospitable hosts, who, for the sake of one soul, could not give up a social custom, or the vain girl whose thoughtlessness or indifference, to say the least, won him to death.

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THE ABYSMAL DEPTHS.

BY A BANKER.

It is stated that if a large sheet of plate glass were inserted in the bottom of a vessel, the floor of the ocean would, within certain limits of depth, be visible with startling distinctness.

And what a spectacle of marvellous and exciting interest must that strange region present. Now, perhaps, we pass over the wreck of a Spanish galleon, the stout timbers of which, after two or three centuries, have at length given way, and the interior of the old ship is exposed to view; wedges of gold from Peru or Mexico scattered about; skeletons of men grasping iron-bound cases probably full of rubies and precious stones; here the bony remains of two forms locked in a death grip, who had perhaps been fighting over the possession of some spoil; and here a number of those antiquated fire-arms which had struck such terror and dismay in the breasts of those Peruvian natives, who, with a vague and strange tradition of Egyptian civilization and theology, thought that Osiris or Horus, or some other heathen deity had come down with their attendants to slaughter them with thunder and lightning.

Or now we pass over the rocky lair of some of those mighty denizens of the deep, great monsters which seldom or never come to the surface, hideous and uncouth, and of whose existence, some even now, are inclined to be sceptical. One perhaps is bringing in his capacious jaws, as food for his uncanny and villainous-looking brood, a struggling young whale now in its death-throes, soon to be devoured by this repulsive herd of grisly monstrosities; while another lies half coiled up, its great projecting bear eyes, as large as small footballs, watching viciously for any prey which has the temerity to approach this terrible den of rapacious ravagers of the deep.

But now, arrived in less profoundly deep waters, we are passing over more pleasing scenes; beautiful forests and nature-arraying gardens, decorated with the waving palm-like fronds of different varieties of sea-plants of many diversified colours and forms; large and graceful corals, some a brilliant vermilion with branches outspread like the tail of a peacock, some a bright golden-orange, with exquisitely shaped pendent terminals, while others are moulded into all manner of forms and designs, elegant vases and tazzas, globular spheres, or ornamental cups; with many hued anemones and other beautiful and shapely sea-flowers; while in and out of this marine bowery of beauty are sportively gambolling many varieties of the funny tribe, which play among the undulating branches, and dart hither and thither in search of food.

But alas! ever and anon we continue to pass over the rent and battered remains of some gallant ship—merchantman, gone down laden with the wealth of Ind; battleship sunk to the depths while engaged in deadly fray; pirate, whose crew, disguised in feminine attire, had oftimes lured its prey within reach, and then, hoisting the fell black flag disfigured with the weird symbol of death's-head and cross bones, had seized the unsuspecting craft and robbed and murdered all on board, but at length meets its fate, and plunges down to the bottom with all its murderous crew and their ill-gotten gains; with many an emigrant ship, sunk down into the briny depths with a great throng, mostly newly-yoked in wedlock, going forth full of hope and glad anticipation, to fight the battle of life hand in hand together on distant lands, but suddenly arrested on the very threshold, and cut off before they had scarce tasted its joys and its sorrows.

And down there in the sunken depths must all those whitened relics of humanity rest until that great momentous Day when the sea shall give up her dead. And then will they whose mis-deeds have been atoned for by the Redeemer, shine in glory and be welcomed by the Great Judge; while they who had sunk to their watery grave unpardoned will receive the dread sentence of condemnation, and to their utmost consternation, be then and there carried off!

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