

THE OLD, OLD FIGHT.

Here the wrangling and the jangling ever creeds, Hear the preacher tell the godly what he needs, They argue through the day time and they argue through the night. They expound from dry goods boxes and they preach and prate and write: They are setting up new gods and tearing old beliefs in shreds, And, like the circling ripples, the commotion overspreads— They talk until they're tired, Each believing he's inspired, Each believing there's importance in the little light he sheds.

They are starting new religions every day, They are daily putting old beliefs away. They are dropping this and that and they are building up anew Every thinker thinks he only knows the course we should pursue; They are groping, they are hoping, they are stumbling in the gloom Every day or two some prophet starts himself a little boom; Higher, higher, even higher, They keep shouting in their ire, With no one sure of anything except the waiting tomb.

The man of science wisely shrugs his shoulders and explains That all the rest is crazy, and is laughed at for his pains; The preacher preaches gravely and the atheist proceeds To smash the church to pieces and to tear apart the creeds— But it's just the same old battle that has of been fought before, And the shouting ones who go it, All believing that they know it, Know as much as you and I do—merely that and nothing more.

—S. E. Kiser.

"TORINDA."

"Please give me a small vial of chloroform, enough for a cat," said Mrs. Lister, to the proprietor of the pharmacy in East Newburg, a suburb of Boston. "That's the way to deal with cats," said he, turning to the shelves for the anesthetic. "It's just dreadful how those poor things suffer when the families go away for the summer!"

"If I could take ours with me! But—" "All the way to Germany and back! Well, I guess not. Scarcely, Mrs. Lister." "My son couldn't be bothered with her. Henry's going to take his holidays in California, you know. And what does any young man care about a cat?"

"I think I see Henry Lister lugging a cat round with him 'cross the continent!" said the druggist with some derision. "But there's Mr. Lister!" he almost winked at the absurdity of his suggestion.

"My husband is going to lodge in Boston all summer—he's so busy he can't get away at all. No, I must give it chloroform—there's no other way. I couldn't think of it prowling round without any home."

"Certainly not, Mrs. Lister, certainly not," said the druggist, really wondering a little at the soft heartedness of Mrs. Lister, who appeared to be rather a stern woman.

It was nearly nine o'clock of an evening of late June, when she left the pharmacy. As she walked up the long hill of East Newburg with the chloroform in her pocket, her heart was sore with sorrow for the cat and herself. Dorinda had been in the family for three years. A sense of meditating something uncomfortably like murder oppressed Mrs. Lister.

No one, she was sure, except herself, loved Dorinda enough to care whether she starved in homelessness, fell a victim to dogs, went wild in trying to live by bird-catching in the oak woods about the Newburgs, perished by some boy's shot gun, or died by her mistress' hand. But, oh, the pity of it, that she must thus save Dorinda from the woes of desertion. It was not fairly her duty, thought Mrs. Lister. Her husband or her son should have had forethought of this dark deed, and, in mercy to her, proposed to undertake it. It could be no more grief to them, both so impassive and reserved. But she had never thought of asking either of them to do this thing. That would be to confess herself sentimental, and she prided herself on being a strong character.

As she walked over her dewy lawn in the faint moonlight, almost ready to forsake her European trip for Dorinda's sake, the doomed animal lay in her husband's lap. He was sitting in the hammock swung on the wide side-piazza, stroking Dorinda gently, and looking out over the trees that lay down the hill toward the valley of the Charles River, its spaces flooded with vague moonshine and punctuated with electric lamps.

Mr. Lister had quite forgotten that he was stroking the cat, for he was thinking in an absent, heart hungry way, of the years when he and his wife had not ceased from demonstrative affection for one another. Though business usually so absorbed him, and the Women's Clubs so occupied her, how lonesome he would find the long months alone in Boston lodgings, miles away from this dear, familiar scene! It seemed particularly hard that his wife should have spent this last evening before the summer breakup at the church, where a special meeting of the Ladies' General Culture Club was being held to receive her belated report on the application of electricity to Mr. Edward Atkinson's cooker. Mr. Lister had never even thought of asking her to forego that duty.

As he heard his wife's steps come over the gravel path, he put Dorinda softly down on the piazza floor. Elvira would, of course, be contemptuous if she saw him petting a cat. Dorinda trotted softly, tail up, to meet her mistress. But Mrs. Lister could not bear to take the cat up in her arms, the confidence of the creature made her feel like a treacherous hypocrite. It was so difficult for her to keep back her tears that her face, as she opened the wire front door and came into the glare of the hall electric, looked hard and set to her husband, who had risen and come round the corner to greet her.

"Well, Elvira, how did the meeting go off," he said, but she went on, not daring to trust herself to reply, walked upstairs and turned into her study.

Mr. Lister had gone back to the hammock with a sigh. It seemed awful that his wife should have Woman's Work to do even yet, but that must be so, judging from the sharp snick of her study door.

Dorinda had followed her mistress upstairs, and Mr. Lister hearing the cat miaow quite pitied the neglected creature. He was too loyal to his wife to let his deep-down thought, that she was very hard-hearted, formulate itself clearly.

For a few minutes Dorinda stood miaowing outside the study door, while Mrs. Lister put the chloroform, with a gesture of loathing, into a closed box on her pigeon-holed desk. As she listened to Dorinda's voice, there was a look of pity and horror in her face that would have amazed most of her emancipating sisterhood.

"I want to come in, for I love you dearly," said the long drawn miaows very plainly.

The lady putting her hands to her ears in a wild way, looked desperately at two corded trunks, and a third that lay open for the last things to be packed at break of day.

When Mrs. Lister took her hands from her ears she no longer heard the cat. Dorinda, losing patience, had walked along the hall, sidling and with waving tail, into the open door of a room, where sat a tall, sunburned youth studying the railway map of California. Feeling the cat against his legs, he stuck a black-headed pin into the map to mark his point, stooped, and lifted Dorinda to his lap, which the desk concealed. Then, stroking the cat with his big, brown right hand, he resumed his study by aid of the left.

Half an hour later when he heard his father coming upstairs, Henry softly moved to be sure that Dorinda was concealed, and peered into guide books so intently that his father said never a word of good-night to disturb him.

How this family of three people had come to such a condition that no one of them had ever seen another caressing Dorinda would be a long tale. True, they naturally admired reserve. But the habit of suppressing signs of affectionate emotion had grown to a degree which would have shocked the father had he foreseen it, when his early preoccupation with business threw his wife back upon herself.

It had grown to a degree which she had never foreseen when she resolutely threw her energies into work outside of home. Young Henry remembered with poignancy the days when as a little boy his mother and father had been wont to cuddle him, always separately, to his recollection. Now he, for youth is imitative, and Harvard is a forcing house of self sufficiency, had grown into simulated as well as real preoccupation, isolation and self-dependence. Yet he loved his father and mother no less tenderly than he was sure they loved each other.

They lived, these three, on terms of undoubting good will, but never a kiss, nor a cordial, emotioned expression, nor an affectionate weeping fit together comforted the hunger of their hearts for demonstrative love.

It was very late that night when Mrs. Lister, with the chloroform in her hand, softly opened the hall door of her study and peered out waiting for Dorinda to come.

Now she was nerved for the sad deed. She had delayed long to be sure that her husband and son were sleeping. But now she must do it; in the morning there would be no time for the tragedy and burial. Mrs. Lister had a clear vision of the very spot in the big flower bed where she meant with her garden spade to inter Dorinda's piteous remains by the light of the moon.

As she saw nothing of the cat she cautiously opened the door between her study and her bedroom. There lay her husband apparently asleep, really very wide awake, for he had been long lying and looking out of the window at the valley and lights of the Charles.

Her husband was sorer at heart now thinking how his wife maintained her isolation to the last moment before their long parting. But he closed his eyes, fearing she would suspect him of silly sentimentality as she turned on a small electric lamp and looked into his face.

"How can he be so callous as to sleep so in view of the morrow," thought she, bitterly, smothering a sigh.

Peeping furtively at his wife as she looked round for the cat, Mr. Lister saw the chloroform vial and sponge in her hand. "What can she be up to?" thought Mr. Lister. "And what on earth is she looking for?"

When she turned off the electric, softly closed her study door, struck a match, lit

Torpid Liver

Is sometimes responsible for difficult digestion, that is, DYSPEPSIA.

When it is, What headache, dizziness, constipation, What fits of despondency, What fears of imaginary evils, conduce with the distress after eating, the sourness of the stomach, the bad taste in the mouth, and so forth, to make the life of the sufferer scarcely worth living!

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a wax candle and went downstairs, Mr. Lister quietly rose, opened the door into the upper hall and stood looking over the "banisters."

"Pussy, pussy, pussy," he could hear his wife whispering. What could she want pussy for? He heard her go through the drawing-room, the library, the dining room, still faintly whispering: "Puss-sy, puss-sy." He heard her go out into the kitchen parts where she stayed long enough to have searched every pantry and store room. Back she came whispering: "Pussy, pussy," more loudly, and down into the cellar she went for quite a long visit. Then, still whispering for Dorinda, she ascended, opened the front doors and went out upon the piazza, where her husband now believed the cat must be.

He hastily half dressed himself and went down stairs. The truth half flashed on him. She was about to chloroform the cat! With strangely mingled emotions of pity for his wife, whose weakness he suddenly comprehended, and anger at her project, he met her coming up the front steps from her bewildered tour of the flower garden.

"What's the trouble, Elvira?" "I don't think I understand you, George."

"Well, I beg your pardon if I'm wrong, but I thought you were looking for Dorinda."

"So I have been."

"Not to chloroform her, surely! I see the bottle in your hand."

"Yes," in a hard voice. "It's mere humanity to save her from homelessness."

"Humane! Why, Elvira, hadn't you better chloroform me? You'd be cruel enough to leave me without even the cat!"

"Cruel to you! I don't understand you, George. You're going to live in Boston."

"Gracious! You don't suppose I'm going without the cat?" "You, George?"

"Yes, I'm fond of that cat," he said dazedly. "Laugh at me if you like, I am. She's all I've got when you and Henry go."

"Well, George Lister!" She laid her left hand on his arm and began to cry in a way that quite ashamed them both. But soon she pulled herself together and spoke, but not without emotion.

"Well, George, you certainly do amaze me. Why, I thought you just hated Dorinda. I often thought how hard you were when pussy would go rubbing against your chair or your legs and you wouldn't even stoop to pick her up or even caress her."

"So did I."

"What?" "I thought the same of you."

"But I always took her up when you weren't there to feel like laughing at me."

"So did I."

"When you weren't there, Elvira."

"And so you were fond of Dorinda, and didn't want me to know it, George!"

"Yes, I guess we've both been making a big mistake, Elvira."

"Why, George, didn't you ever suspect I took Dorinda as a kitten because I just had to have something that would let me pet it, after Henry got too big?"

"Elvira—Vi, dear," the man paused long. "Do you remember the times when we were young together?" he whispered.

"George," he could scarcely hear her. "And yet we've grown apart—you gradually got so busy."

"Yes, Elvira, it was all my fault. I see it now."

"No, for I took up this work," she said, shamed by his magnanimity.

They went arm in arm to the hammock, and sat there.

"George, I'll write you at least twice a week all the time I'm gone," she whispered.

"Elvira, you can't imagine what a comfort that will be to me. But, I say, where is that blessed cat? I could hug her."

"It's so strange," said Mrs. Lister in an eerie tone, and with a slight shiver. "Seems almost as if she had suspected what was in my mind and gone away."

"It does make me feel superstitious, too, Elvira. But let's look around for her together."

daylight to start you, Viry. Fact is, I was stroking Dorinda in my lap when you came across the lawn."

"You were, George! And you were ashamed to let me know it?"

"And you to pick her up when she ran to meet you. Beats all how blind we've been about that cat. But where can she be?"

"Do you suppose she could be in Henry's room?"

"Goodness no! He'd be sure to drive her out. Henry never even looks friendly at her."

"But he might have gone in and curled up asleep somewhere, so he didn't notice her."

"Well, maybe. Let's peek in."

The mother shaded her candle with one hand, while her husband very gently opened the door. On the bed, nearly on his back, lay the athlete, with only a sheet over him in the warm June night. One strong forearm, half-bared from the wrist, and sun-browned with much rowing, lay outstretched along the pillows. Its corded muscles made a pillow for Dorinda! She had curled on the arm as if satisfied that it would never move to her hurt, and even yet she did not seem disturbed.

As the parents approached the bed, on opposite sides, Henry drew a short breath and half turned on his side, but without changing the position of his right arm. Still Dorinda, though she lifted her head and looked at the incomers, did not move. Instead, she snuggled down and began to purr softly, seeming pleased to be seen on such good terms with the young giant.

Something in the picture moved the parents too deeply for words. Henry's brown face wore the ineffable half-smile of his early boyhood. So he had looked often, vaguely thought the mother, when she crooned the song after lulling him. Now the purring of the cat seemed to penetrate his dreams with a sense of voiced affection. And his father and mother felt remorse; they had grown during four or five years, to think of him as really self sufficient, impassive, hard-headed, needing no clear expressions of love.

Mrs. Lister reached out her hands and stroked the cat. Still Henry did not waken. They were half afraid to rouse him; he would be so vexed at the discovery of his chumming with Dorinda.

As Mrs. Lister touched the blue ribbon round the cat's neck, she noticed that a long cord was tied to it, and, with much amazement, motioned to her husband to behold that the cord was tied to the brass bedstead.

Just then Henry woke, and Mrs. Lister lifted the cat in her arms. The youth sat up, clutching at the open neck of his night shirt, and with staring wonder at his parents.

As he saw the cat in his mother's arms, a rush of blood went over his brown face and white upper forehead. Then he looked sheepish. Then he looked deeply offended. But he did not speak. And his parents hardly dared to address him in their emotion.

"You see, Henry, we were just looking round for the cat, that's all," said Mrs. Lister, awkwardly.

"Yes, mother. Well, you've found her."

"Your mother feels sorry to be leaving the cat, you see, Henry. She was going to chloroform her," said the father. "But I—"

"Well, I guess not!" said Henry, very sharply. "Chloroform Dorinda, mother!"

"I was afraid it would be homeless, Henry, and so in mercy—"

"Homeless! Not much. Why, she's going—"

"It's all right, Henry, after all," the mother hastily interposed. "Your father's going to keep her in Boston with him."

"In Boston? Father! Gracious, father couldn't! Why, she'd starve. How could father be bothered? I'm going to take Dorinda with me!"

"You, Henry to California and back?" "Why, of course; in a covered basket. That's why I tied her up, don't you see, for fear she'd go away somewhere in the morning, so I couldn't find her. You couldn't expect father to worry himself taking care of a cat, mother."

"But father wants to, Henry. That was his plan before he knew mine."

Henry looked at his father with staring wonder.

"It's so, Henry," said Mr. Lister, defensively. "Why, hang it all, what are you surprised about? Suppose I'm not fond of the cat? Why, she'll be the only home thing I've got when you're both gone. I've got to have her, don't you understand. I'll be so lonesome."

Henry held out one big hand to his father and the other to his mother. Without a word, they sat down on opposite sides of his bed, and looked into a face that they had not seen so happily moved for five or six years. The mother, holding the cat out in her hands, pushed its head affectionately against the brown neck of her recovered boy. Then she leaned forward and kissed him.

The father held Henry's hand tightly in both his, and said nothing.

"Well, father," said Henry after a long pause, "of course a fellow knows his father is just as good and kind you know, and everything, letting a fellow go to California and all that, but—why, I never thought you'd miss us that way, father, and Dorinda, too!"

(Continued on Page 5.)

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