

POETRY.

BARFOOTED AFTER THE COWS.

"The boys" had come back to the farm. Which all through one's life bears a charm; And though we were all sturdy men, We thought to live over again.

The pond and the swift skimming swallow: The wood where the owl used to hallow— Who-oo! who-oo!

The barn full of hay Seemed smaller that day. We tumbled down over the mows; The grass in the meadow was growing.

The cows in the meadow were lowing Mo-oo! mo-oo! Ah! life has no joy Like that of a boy.

Running barefooted after the cows! We ate of the apples that fell From the harvest tree with black bread.

For never in life could we meet With apples that seemed half so sweet; Not water had we ever tasted Like that which the spring ever wasted.

For God made the vintage to flow From the winneps of pebbles below. The squirrel so proud of his tail, The chipmunk who travels by rail.

The blackbird, the robin, the Jay— Each gave us a greeting that day. The pastimes of boyhood we courted In places where once we had sported.

And when the old dinner horn blew We felt the old hunger anew. 'Twas more like enacting a dream! We waded and fished in the stream.

Which somehow looked shallow and small, Nor did the old trees seem as tall; Each ideal of boyhood seemed shattered, And even the kingfisher chattered.

No power to bring back the joys of childhood to overgrown boys. Not the same was the pond nor the wallow, The wood where the owl used to hallow.

Who-oo! who-oo! The barn full of hay Seemed smaller that day. We tumbled down over the mows, New grass in the meadow was growing.

Strange cows in the meadow were lowing Mo-oo! mo-oo! We felt not the joys, We were not the boys.

Who ran barefooted after the cows. SELECT STORY.

LOU'S IDEA.

BY ALICE PERCY.

There were three girls of us—Lou, Bess, and myself; and we all lived together in a small, neat, gray cottage, with roses growing over the front porch, a trim lawn beneath, and a big meadow of sweet clover, whose pink and white blossoms stretched for half an acre at the back of the old orchard of marbled apple trees.

Lou was the eldest, and chief money-maker of the flock, walking two and a half miles, to and from the neighboring city, where her school was located, every day and morning. Bess was an artist dress-maker, that is, she manufactured "almost Parisian" costumes, for the aspiring village maidens, who desired to appear equally smart with their more pretentious city neighbors—setting aside part of the proceeds earned thereby to defray the cost of her weekly painting lesson—and lastly Penelope, played the part of housewife, and chef d'oeuvre, they were good enough to say, very acceptably, to my elder and more talented sisters.

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We had managed on the whole very successfully. Bess working every spare moment at her easel in hopes—as she said—of becoming worthy of a better model than the "three-cent" dummy, while I devoted myself, with equal ardor, to the care of my flourishing poultry, Bartlett pears, and strawberry bed; pet hobbies that brought me in quite a tidy little sum, thus keeping my supply of pocket money intact, and enabling me to replenish my own wardrobe with respectably thanks to Bess's fertile brain and clever fingers.

In this way we all contrived to keep together, and live in comparative comfort, through strict economy, without being compelled—as yet—to adopt that last resource, throwing open wide our dear front door, and inviting the festive boarder to cross its sacred threshold.

"I want to keep 'home,' girls," Lou had said, when things seemed growing rather dark with us, the summer after we were thrown on our own resources. "No matter how much fret and worry we have in our work-a-day world, there is always the thought, a peaceful home awaits us, and it will never be the same again, once a band of belles, beaux, and blazers, have made acquaintance with every nook and cranny. No! don't let us say anything more about taking boarders."

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We used often to hear flattering comments on our quiet little cottage, from passers-by; and, indeed, it did look pretty enough, with its bit of emerald lawn in front, and the heart-shaped bed of pansies which Bess had designed, and I had filled in with plants from Vick's conservatory.

But work went on as usual; the same though June had come, and the world was full of sunshine and song. Lou had brought home great sprays of sweetbrier, to deck the parlor, where Bess sat work all day, and I scrubbed away at the washub, or burned my face the color of a boiled lobster over my strawberry bed, in spite of the protestations showered upon me.

"I'd rather work outdoors any day," I maintained, stoutly; "the Bess who deserves the pity, shut up in that dark room from morning till night, fitting and making people's clothes; or, you yourself, Lou—but vacation is near at hand, I am thankful to say. As for myself, I ask nothing better than to potter around among my plants and things."

One evening, we sat out upon the front doorstep, watching the sun sink and glorify the western world. Bess was dressed in a dainty mull gown, made of one of her picturesque styles, and sitting her winsome loveliness to perfection. We were all very proud of Bess, who was the beauty of the family. Lou was reading aloud snatches of "Their Pilgrimage," a book she had taken from the circulating library that morning, for our evening literary repast.

"I thought it would be next best to seeing all these delightful places; but I find it only fills my heart with vain repining, to think I am shut away from the real thing," she sighed, closing the book on a fascinating description of the ascent of Mount Washington. "Oh, girls! what wouldn't I give to see the White Mountains!"

"Ah!" echoed Bess, in response, instinctively feeling her drawing pad and pencil, while I thought of my botanical portfolio, and the bliss of adding to it

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"I wish we could go," sighed Bess once more; "we haven't a single lark since last summer, when we camped out on Piney Island. The mountain air would be just the thing for Lou's cough. Dr. Brier said so. Poor little Pen needs a holiday sadly, and I could get so many new ideas and sketches to work up. Besides, there's the prettiest mountain costume in one of my fashion magazines. I could have cried, when I had it fit those fleshy Delaware girls out, in one like it, the other day, for a summer in the Adirondacks. Wait just a minute, and I'll show it to you"—darting into the house, and emerging with a well-thumbed copy of Godey's Lady's Book.

"Lou's should be blue, with black braid. Mine blue, with white, and Pen's blue and scarlet, with Apine hats to match," she explained, as we all bent over it. "Now, isn't it a beauty? And so cheap! Twenty-five cents a yard, and made in a twinkling."

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WHO IS TO BLAME.

Scene—Breakfast table. Big Brother—What makes you look so sleepy, Mary?

Little Brother—Hey! Mary had a bean last night. You ought to have seen him coming up the walk! Oh my! And how red Mary's face was when she opened the door!

Mother—Her face isn't far from red now. I think I must bring her own coal along. I can't afford to keep up such late fires.

Big Brother—He is nearly red-headed, too, and tall enough to do for a flag-staff. Little Brother—But didn't he give me lots of candy, though?—and I heard him to Max.

Older Sister—She talked in her sleep last night, and what do you think she said?

Poor sensitive Mary flies from the room in a passion of anger and mortification, followed by a merry peal of laughter. The mother and father mean no harm by their thoughtless encouragement of this cruel chaffing.

"She will have to get used to a little teasing," is the careless comment; and Mary is left to cool her anger unmolested except by an occasional battering at the locked door from the irrepressible little brother.

"It's no use," sobe Mary, with her burning face buried in the pillows. "He shall never come here again! I will meet him down town, or at Jennie's, or go driving with him, but I won't stand their constant making fun of him."

The die is cast, and mutual confidence is forever destroyed between Mary and her natural protectors. All attempts at gaining her confidence are "prying into her secrets." A "bean" is her only something to be ashamed of. She mentions him only to her girl-friend, who, perhaps, considers herself to be suffering a like martyrdom.

"Mary is so strange," sighs the mother, "so different from Helen!" and plain, practical, unexcitable Helen wonders why Mary never tells her any love secrets.

Then comes a storm. Mary is determined to marry the most profligate young man in town. After all her careful christian training, she will throw herself away upon a man who, everybody knows, will make her wretched for life. Father storms, mother sobs, sister scolds, brother threatens, but Mary and her martyr girl-friend prefer the fatal arrangements for a wedding; and every one pines the gray-haired father, consider why Mary never tells her any love secrets.

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