

POETRY.

MY MENDING BASKET.

It is made of the stoutest of willow; It is deep and spacious and wide, Yet the golf stream that flows through its borders, Seems always to stand at flood-tide!

And the garments lie heaped on each other; I look at them often and sigh, Shall I ever be able to grapple With a pile that has grown two feet high?

There's a top layer, always of stockings; These arrive and depart every day, And the things that are playing "button button," Also leave without any delay.

But ah, underneath there are strata, Buried deep as the earth's escarp; Things put there first of the autumn, Still there when the trees have grown green.

There are things to be ripped and made over; There are things that gave out in their prime; There are intricate tasks all awaiting One magical hour of "spare time."

Will it come? Shall I ever possess it? I start with fresh hope every day, Like a will-o'-the-wisp it allures me, Like a will-o'-the-wisp, fades away.

For the basket has never been empty, During all of its hunched career, But once, for a few fleeting moments, When the baby upset it last year. —Bessie Chandler, in Harper's Bazar.

SELECT STORY.

SEVILLE TOWERS TRAGEDY.

By the author of "The Gypsy's Revenge," "A Woman Scorned," etc.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUED.

"You know dear,"—rightly interpreting her silence; "you yourself were saying scarcely a week ago, that Nora and Gwen may have a governess."

"But not a governess, Lennox; nor one so young as you describe this Miss Curtis to be. Besides,"—hesitatingly, "I so much desired a thorough lady."

"So this Miss Curtis seems, both in appearance and speech. If you could only see her, Lennox, and hear her mournful description of the family's altered circumstances since her father's death, I think you would not hesitate to help her at any rate."

"I don't doubt Miss Curtis' need, nor our desire to repay the sacrifice which proved your salvation, Lennox; I only demur over the payment has to be made—money. An offer of the lodge which Peckham's death has vacated, seems to me a much more satisfactory arrangement, inasmuch as it includes the whole of the family. Besides, my orphaned niece, pretty Mariel Coates, can teach Gwen and Nora for awhile. She is an independent little body, and may prove awkward at accepting a yearly allowance for dress, to which she has rightly no claim; whilst if we constitute her their governess—we only want mild teaching at present, she will fancy she has earned it, and she is just the sort of soft, lovable girl, firm, yet gentle and amiable, that I should like for an example to the children. She comes next week, you know. Suppose, Lennox,—laying her hand coaxingly on her husband's sleeve, and looking with love-like eyes into his, "that I write to Mrs. Curtis and offer them the lodge. Baynam and wife will be disappointed, but our debt to them is not as great as to the Curtis."

Mr. Seville could not tell why he failed to join in his wife's enthusiasm over this scheme. Perhaps he had hoped to do more for a family, the head of which had, in a sense, died in his stead; but whatever he felt, he betrayed no objection to the suggestion.

So the letter was written; just the one that gladdened the heart of Mrs. Curtis to receive. Edna was furious, and unkindly, in the postscript Mrs. Seville, by some unfortunate afterthought, put—"or if you much prefer it, your youngest daughter could perhaps come and teach my children." That sentence settled the whole affair. It offered the very chance Edna had been working and longing for. She had successfully poured the idea into Mr. Seville's brain; she had decanted on it favorably from every point of view; so it was likely that, when she had all worked round as she desired, she was merely going to let it be negated by a mother and sister whom she could work round her fingers? Not at all.

But she had better work to gain her way than she had ever supposed. Likely Mrs. Curtis really was desirous of changing the London suburbs for the quiet of a country life, the dust of town for the green fields and arched trees of her childhood; and had not Patty's entrance been united to Edna's—Patty, who still clung to the hope that Jim Haver might return to the shelter of his first fancy, and who dared not leave his neighborhood lest she lost her every chance, the probability is that Edna would never have gone to Seville Towers, and this over-the-hill history never have been chronicled. But with her two children, and their inclinations pulling against her, Mrs. Curtis had at last to give way, and the letter was sent, thanking Mrs. Seville for her kindness and saying that of the two offers, the family preferred to accept the second, namely, the one that gave Edna the chance of becoming governess. Salary was delicately alluded to, but through a fear of giving a loophole of escape, the younger Miss Curtis dictated that the settlement of money could be left to the discretion of the Sevilles.

Not that she had any notion of accepting a small salary. She was about as fit to be a queen of society as she was to be a governess; but that mattered but little to her. If she could but force an entrance into Seville Towers, her poor services should be liberally paid. What was lacking, she was fully resolved, if there was any difficulty in obtaining, to help herself to self-depreciation was not one of Edna's failings.

Mrs. Seville was greatly taken back when she received Mrs. Curtis' epistle, but it arrived at a favorable time, just after pretty Mariel Coates had gone to reside at Seville Towers. Mariel was so ready to jump up for anyone, so adaptable to circumstances, and always so cheery and bright, that instead of desisting from the home happiness, she seemed rather to add to it. If Mariel did not prove a nuisance, why should the forlorn Miss Curtis, whom Mr. Seville felt so bound to aid, and who was both young and pretty? Still, Mrs. Seville marvelled at the advantage that had been taken of her suggestion.

"I am sure Lennox," she observed, in perplexed dismay, "I did not ask for the daughter to come and teach. I said 'perhaps' we might have her. They ought not to assume so much."

"Dear Tottie" (he called her both Lotie and Tottie) "a drowning man does not hesitate to catch at a straw, and I suspect things are almost at this desperate pass with the Curtis."

"Then why not have come to the lodge, dearest Lennox? All the family would have been helped then."

"Ah! just so. I cannot reply, unless Miss Edna is much superior to the rest of the family; I fancy she must be. The other two never came near, so perhaps they can scrape on as long as she is provided for."

"But Mariel! Othello's occupation is gone."

"Most seemly that it should be. Your niece could hardly be expected to take a post that, make the best of it, is but menial. Mariel can drive out with you when the children are at school, help to entertain callers, write letters, and to be a help in a hundred varied ways."

Mrs. Seville gave in at last, but she only gave in unwillingly; her word, not her conviction, was changed. Who can account for this, presentment, or whatever we call the superstitious feeling that pervades our very being at certain epochs of our lives? We feel that such and such a step will be disastrous, we know not why; we are weighed down, as if with a burden, at the very thought.

Sometimes the after-consequences prove that the warning ought to have been heeded. If we had only acted as our inward monitor advised, how far different would our circumstances have been if we had heeded him. Mr. Seville did not care for ladies' society, save and except his wife's, and he hastened by without looking up. His peculiarity this way was known in the district, and his lack of geniality did not tell in his favor.

"Halloa, Seville, old boy! You out again," exclaimed a gentleman, emerging from a third-class carriage almost at the extreme end of the train. "Glad to see you. Wait till I get my luggage out of this confounded grab bag, and I'll introduce Rayner."

A much smaller gentleman, but equally dark as himself, followed.

"Your wife's niece and I are acquaintances," Mr. Rayner said.

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Seville hurriedly. "Mariel is partly engaged, I believe. Come along Thompson, bring Mariel's friend—"

As he spoke, a voice broke in: "Mr. Seville, please stop; I am out of breath from running after you. How am I to get to Seville Towers? Is the carriage for me?"

"Miss Cur—this, you here!" exclaimed Mr. Seville in unfeigned and not over-pleasant surprise. "Does my wife expect you? She never told me, if so."

"They had walked out of the station, and a man in livery, with dog-cart, was holding a restless horse."

"Mrs. Seville has not written for two days," declared Edna, bursting into artificial tears; "and my mother quarrelled—"

"Oh, please don't scold me," burst in Mrs. Seville's sudden voice. "I can return again if you wish it. Only I was miserable at home, and so anxious to become acquainted with you, that I risked it."

"And now my son is gone to a school near London, Alice is in bed, and the two girls are out to tea."

"Miss Curtis will dine with us, Tottie. Come see after us all. I am as tired as I can well be, and as hungry as a hunter."

Knowing that her husband hated feet, Mrs. Seville soon had everyone in their respective rooms. Then after embracing her husband and kissing him, undoing his boots and putting on his warmed slippers, she went herself to see after Edna's comfort.

"I scarcely think, Lennox dear, that Miss Curtis will care for dining with us," she remarked as she was leaving the room.

"Then send her meal upstairs," he said.

"I suppose we shall have to keep her in her proper position. A girl of her—"

"Fiddle position! I should say, if we have a girl here in gratitude, that we ought to make her one of ourselves. I don't like her coming as she has done; but there, she's almost obliged to expect. We must be kind to her."

Which addendum was scarcely requisite to Mrs. Seville. Whatever she felt as to the policy of having a governess—especially under the circumstances that had brought Miss Curtis—Mrs. Seville was bound to be kind to her. But that her previous objections to engaging any lady for the office of instructing her children on the plea of repaying a debt, in utter ignorance to her capabilities, were despatched and intensified a hundred-fold by Edna's bold course of arrival, was a fact. Yet in her consideration for sparing her husband's feelings, she would not dwell on it. She saw he was sufficiently ruffled by himself. There was no man living, who liked to be done right, more than did Mr. Seville.

"May I come in, Miss Curtis?" Mrs. Seville asked, at that young lady's door. After a perceptible pause, the answer came—"Yes."

Edna was standing before the glass, engaged in inserting a pretty chemistie into her hair. She looked at the girl who had dexterously fastened back; and even at that moment Mrs. Seville was struck by the vivid beauty of the rose-lipped cheeks and the very blue eyes.

"I am afraid you will find it very dull here," she exclaimed, impulsively, "being the one thought that entered her head as she realized the girl's prettiness."

"It was a mistake to come. We should have found some other and much more suitable way of helping you."

"Mr. Seville and I decided that this plan was the best," replied Edna, pursuing her occupation and treating the lady of the house cavalierly.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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HOT. The eye of a little Washington Miss was attracted by the sparkle of the dew at early morning.

Mamma, she exclaimed, it's hotter'n I thought it was.

What do you mean?

Look here. The grass is all covered with perspiration.

A BOON TO HORSEMEN.—One bottle of English Savin Liniment completely removed a curb from my horse. I take pleasure in recommending the remedy, as it acts with mysterious promptness in the removal from horses of hard, soft or caloused lumps, blood spavin, splints, curbs, twenty, stifles and sprains.

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A little fellow was taken into his mother's chamber to see for the first time a baby brother. The three-year-old lad looked on with a calmly critical regard, and then, turning to the maid who had accompanied him, he said, very decidedly, Jane, you keep that in the kitchen.

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MAKING SCORES EVEN. And what's your reason for increasing the servant's wages, pray? her friend asked.

Because my husband complained that his dress and military bills equalled the household expenses, and I want to show him they do not.

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WHAT EMBOLDENED HIM. She (tenderly)—Tell me, dearest, what emboldened you to propose? How did you guess that I loved you, darling?

He—To be frank with you, love, your papa intimated that if I didn't mean business after coming to see you for two years, I had better clear out and give some other fellow a chance.

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OVERHEARD. Little's afraid of growin' fat, said dear little Tommy, who was being exhibited before company.

How do you know that? asked one of the guests.

Because, replied Tommy, confidently, last night when she and Mr. Makewell were on the piazza I heard her say: 'I'm afraid I'm heavy, ain't I?'

GET THE BEST. The public are too intelligent to purchase a worthless article a second time, on the contrary they want the best!

"Oh please don't scold me," burst in Mrs. Seville's sudden voice. "I can return again if you wish it. Only I was miserable at home, and so anxious to become acquainted with you, that I risked it."

Death! said the bore, interrupting the conversation at a few minutes after twelve. I believe it must be time for me to go. Oh, but it can't be, said the third girl, emphatically, that time won't come around again till to-morrow evening.

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Why don't you try to paddle your own canoe, growled Brown as Jones struck him for ten. I can't, said Jones, but I am trying to float a loan.

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Quite Necessary.—Why, Dottie, I thought you were going to be married? So I was, and the banns were put up and to be read, but as we did get any presents we've put it off till times are better.

Mutual Friend.—It really is shocking, dear the way in which you and your husband quarrel and carry it. I wonder you don't separate from him. Injured Wife.—What! go away and leave him alone to do just as he likes? Not me!

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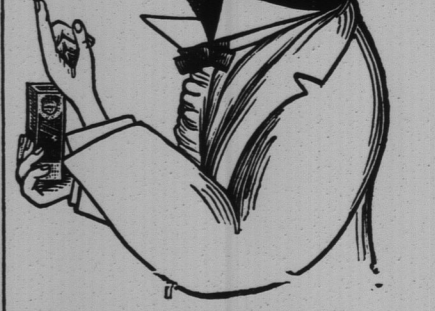
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