POETRY.

A LITTLE FARM IN MAINE.

BY LIZZIE A. L. TIBBETTS.

It was noon-time, and the owner
Of a little farm in Maine
With his stalwart son was walking
Homeward from his field of grain.

Presently, the son, half halting,
Said in an impatient tone,
"Father, I am tired of farming,
And the truth I'm bound to own!"

"I've been growing tired, this long while,
Of the humdrum life we lead;
Every year the same old story—
Plow and plant, then hoe and weed;

Mow and reap and gather apples;
Husk the corn, and thresh the grain!—
One thing, work is always plenty
On a little farm in Maine.

"We no more than get our wood up
When there comes a three days' blow;
Giving us, for recreation,
Two days' work at shovelling snow.

"New Year's Day most always finds us
Where it did the year before;
With, above our yearly living,
Bare two hundred dollars more!"

"So I've thought the matter over,
And made up my mind to go
To some stirring western city;
Times are better there, I know."

"Well, my son," the farmer answered,
You are old enough to choose
For yourself; but your decision
Is, to me, unwelcome news.

"You once told me, you'll remember,
That, unless you stayed with me,
You should buy a farm adjoining,
So that neighbors we might be.

"But, as you are discontented
And feel bound to go away,
Home will have to do without you;
I'll not urge you, boy, to stay."

* * * * * *

It was evening; by the fireside
Sat the farmer and his wife;
While, without, the wind was playing
On December's frosty fife.

"'Tis a rough night," sighed the farmer,
"And, somehow, I always miss
Our dear boy more, little mother,
On a stormy night like this."

"Yes, I know," she answered, softly,
"Seems to me I've missed him more
Since I woke, this stormy morning,
Than I have a day before."

"Every paper tells of hundreds
Out of their employment thrown,
And, to-night, among the number
One dear lad may be our own!"

At these words, the door was opened;
And the son thus loved and missed
Gave his right hand to his father,
And his mother's lips he kissed.

"I have lost my place," he told them,
"But of that I'll not complain
If you'll keep me busy, father,
On 'a little farm in Maine!'"

"I have heard enough sad stories,
Since these mournful times began,
To convince me that the farmer
Is the prosperous working man.

"Since I left my birthplace, father,
I have learned to know its worth;—
That 'a little farm in Maine' can be,
The dearest home on earth!"

—Maine Farmer.

SELECT STORY.

BONNIE ADAIR.

By the Author of 'Mrs. Delamotte's Lover' 'Black Pool Grange,' Etc.

CHAPTER I.

THIS is right for South Bay, isn't it?"

"Yes. Oh, Yes."

"And we don't have to change?"

"No; we go straight through. This is an express, and we get there in an hour and a half."

"Thank you," and the young lady who had sprung into the carriage in such a desperate hurry, leant back in the corner with a sigh of relief; then she was again seized with misgivings, and leaning out of the window looked up and down the platform with an anxious expression on her face. It was a dull and dreary junction at which the train was stopping, but the porters had plenty of work to get through before the four o'clock mail left the station, and no one took any notice of that questioning face and the gloved hand held up at intervals as a signal.

"Can I do anything for you?"

It was the other occupant of the carriage who addressed her, a young man of about seven-and-twenty, who had been watching her with some little interest.

"If you could make one of these porters come," she said, turning from the window and looking at him. "I want to know if my trunk is in; in this hurry and scurry I forgot all about it."

"Tell me what it is like and I will go and see."

"Oh, thank you so much," she said with evident gladness; "but are you sure there is time? It is a black basket trunk, with a big A in white on the top, and on each side it is labelled 'Miss Adair, passenger to South Bay via Hepworth Junction.'"

Almost before she had finished speaking, the stranger had made his way down to the luggage van, and there Miss Adair lost sight of him. What a long time he was too! And now the train was beginning to move. As she saw him coming quickly along, she held the door wide open for him, leaning forward so that he should see her and know the carriage; in another second he had jumped in, the door was banged, and they were steaming away out into the open country.

"It was all right," the young man said, quietly resuming his seat.

"Thank you so much," she said gratefully. I was afraid it would be left behind. I am not use to travelling."

"No, I can see that."

She did not inquire how, though, as she sat gazing out across the broad meadows, which seemed to be flying past, she wondered how on earth he had seen it. What had she done to show she was not use to this sort of thing? She felt put out, not exactly with herself, nor with him; but she had thought herself so very grown up, taking this journey all alone, and considered she had done it so well and cleverly, having changed twice, and each time got into the right train (after asking at least eight persons before she actually got in) and then she forgot all about it in the pleasure of watching the ever-changing scene.

This went on for some time, till the girl grew tired of watching for a break, and turning her head, found her companion staring at her. She was not at all disconcerted, she did not even blush, but met the gaze quite frankly and smiled. Poor Bonnie Adair! she was only a very innocent, guileless child, as she travelled with Alec Doyle on that burning August noon. He returned the smile pleasantly enough, and leaning forward, asked if she had come from any distance.

"Yes; I have been in the train since ten," she told him. "I have been staying with my aunt in South Wales."

"Then you have had a long journey. I am only running down from town, just to see some friends at South Bay. Do you know the place at all?"

"Yes, I live there; at least, we have lived there for nearly two years. It is the sweetest, prettiest place you can imagine; only the people spoil it."

"Do they? How horrid of them! And what do they do it for?"

"Because they can't help it, I suppose," she said, with a little laugh. "They hate me and Lenore, and they are very stuck up and narrow minded."

"And you and Lenore are not?"

"Oh, no! I do not think anyone could say we were that; but I don't know why they dislike us," she ended, naively. "You see, we are not society girls; sometimes I think it is that."

"I should say that must be it. And may I ask who is Lenore?"

"Lenore is my sister;" she said, as if the fact was something to be proud of; "she is quiet the prettiest girl in South Bay," then added softly to herself, as she gazed over the now visible landscape, "Dear Lenore!"

The color deepened on her cheeks as she pictured herself at home again, and thought of the welcome she would receive. What a slow, tedious journey it was to be sure! Then she suddenly addressed her companion.

"What made you think I wasn't used to travelling?"

He smiled a slow, lazy smile, that lighted up his fair, handsome face and sleepy, blue eyes.

"The way you rushed at the train and hurried in, without a glance or thought as to who might be your travelling companion. Your one idea was to get in before the train went on, and as we had five good minutes, you might have taken it quite easily. Then you fished out your ticket quite three times to make sure it was safe, and after that, when time was nearly up, you remembered your luggage."

Bonnie was laughing heartily at the picture of herself.

"I have never been anywhere alone before," she explained. "You, I suppose, are quite an old traveller, for when the train was moving you hardly hurried, and I thought you were going to be left behind."

"Not much fear of that," and then he fell to telling her of various journeys he had made, of adventures and hair breadth escapes, and of wonderful sights he had witnessed abroad, to all of which Bonny listened with absorbing interest till the train began to slacken speed, and with a start of surprise she discovered they were at South Bay.

"Why, we are here!" she exclaimed, joyfully, as each well known object came in sight. "Thank you so much for having been so nice."

"I think it is I who ought to thank you," he said, as he helped her to take a roll of rugs and umbrellas off the rack.

"But I did nothing to amuse you," she expostulated. "Oh! there is Lenore and dear Topsey! How fat he has grown!"

Bonny, radiant with delight, skipped on to the platform, and was hugging Lenore, whilst Topsy, a hideous looking pug, danced round giving short gasps of delight.

"You are so late," Lenore said; "it is a quarter to six. Mother will think something has happened. There's your trunk; Stephen will bring it up. Your ticket, Bonny."

Bonny was trying to squeeze herself through the gate, utterly regardless of the collector's hand extended before her.

"I really quite forgot," she laughed, as she drew it from her glove in a very dilapidated condition, and then the two girls made their way up a broad road, with fields on one side and houses on the other, then round a corner to where the top windows of a pretty country cottage looked over the private hedge surrounding the garden. Bonny, all eagerness, pushed the gate open, and with flying feet had travered the short path, dashed into the house and was kissing her mother.

"Why, bonny. dear, how you have grown," Mrs. Adair exclaimed.

"Not fatter!" the girl implored, tragically. "Oh, say, I'm not fatter!"

"But I think you are," Mrs. Adair persisted, smiling proudly at her youngest daughter, who threw herself into a chair and took her hat.

"This is a blow," she declared. "I thought I had grown beautifully less. Haven't I improved at all?"

"Very much indeed," Lenore said, in her low sweet voice. "You look grown up, and quite good looking."

"Really!" Bonny cried joyfully. "And you—what has Lenore done to herself? She has such a color, and—why, Lenore, you look so happy."

"It is because you have come home," the elder girl said, blushing softly. "I missed you dreadfully."

"I don't believe it," Bonny declared. "I believe that Mr.—whatever's his name?—made up for everything. His horrid name has been in every letter. What a nice tea, mother; you have been extravagant!" and the girl drew her chair to the table, which was plentifully bespread with fruit, cakes, jam, and cold fowl.

That was a merry meal; there was so much to tell, so much to hear, and just as it was all over, a dark man in flannels came in at the gate and walked slowly up to the door.

"Ted Charteris," Mrs. Adair exclaimed, as if she was quite pleased, and Lenore blushed again, while her lovely, blue-grey eyes grew so dark and shy, Bonny could only stare at her in amazement. Mr. Charteris was shown into the drawing room, and Bonny went to wash the traces of the day's journey off her face.

Mrs. Adair was called away by Mary the maid-of-all work, and Lenore found she was the only one left to entertain Mr. Charteris. He was standing in the middle of the room when she entered, a good-looking specimen of manhood, with a frank, fearless face, which brightened visibly when Lenore entered alone.

"I have only just got back from Portsmouth," he said, holding her hand a great deal longer than was necessary. "I came in to see if you would come for a row."

"If Bonny would like to go; only I'm afraid she will be too tired."

"Can't you come without her. It is such a glorious evening, the sea is like a mill-pond."

"I should like to go—of course I should like to go; only I don't wan't to appear unkind to Bonny," she looked shyly up at him as she spoke, and of a sudden his face flushed a deep, dusky red.

"Lenore you are looking lovely this evening. Don't be angry, I must tell you so. You look so sweet and beautiful, that somehow I feel as if I ought not to talk to you at all, and yet I could not go away now and never see you again. I think I shall haunt you always and keep all the other men away."

"You would soon grow tired," the girl said, a little wistfully, adding brightly: "Once you know Bonny, you will not care to talk to me. She is so full of spirits you are sure to like her best."

"Like her. Yes, I daresay I shall like her best," he said, musingly.

Ted Charteris had come down to South Bay to visit his relatives, and in him Lenore had met her fate. They were meant for each other, evidently, for with both it had been a case of love at first sight, and though he had never told it to her in so many words, Lenore felt that he did love her, and she simply worshipped him.

After a time Bonny joined them and was introduced, and though she refused to go for a row, she insisted upon Lenore going. So the two set out, and Bonny, after watching them out of sight, put her hand on her mother's arm, and the two strolled round the garden.

"I say, mother, are they engaged?" Bonny put the question jerkily, as she stopped to pick a flower.

"I don't know," Mrs. Adair sighed. "He admires Lenore immensely. Mrs. Charteris came up here the other day and was quite disagreeable. She said they never saw anything of their son, and that people were saying unpleasant things because he was always here."

"Why didn't you turn him out neck and crop?" Bonnie cried, indignantly. "I am sure we don't wan't him here, and now I'm at home, Lenore won't be dull."

"Sometimes I'm afraid she cares a good deal for him," Mrs. Adair said, in her whining way. "However, he is going up to town to-morrow, so if there is anything in it he will tell her so. I suppose I shall have all South Bay about my ears for letting her go out with him this evening, just as if I could go and chaperone her; why the very thought of the water makes me ill. You poor children would have very little pleasure, if you waited for me to take you about. Ah! that re minds me. Bonny, dear, I haven't any of my last medicine; I can't spare Mary this evening—can you run down to Andrews'?"

"I should like to," Bonny said, going indoors for her hat; and then she walked briskly down to the little sea-side town, meeting two or three friends on the road, and nodding carelessly to people whom she knew, and who did not approve of 'those Adair girls.'

Having been to the chemists, she turned her steps towards the Esplanade, where the visitors were promenading to the strains of the town band. It was a perfect summer's evening; the sky, cliff, and sea were bathed in a golden haze; canoes and rowing-boats shot hither and thither, the lip lap of the waves mingled with the tender waltz air that was being played.

Bonny left the crowded parade, and making her way on to the sands, walked slowly and thoughtfully by the margin of the sea; while Topsy, who had followed her, waddled a few paces behind.

After going for some distance along the beach, she took a winding, circuitous route up the cliff, and having gained the summit, stood and surveyed the scene. Before her stretched a wide expanse of rippling, shimmering water; behind her the heavy headed corn nodded in the evening calm. It was all quiet and peaceful up here—no people, and only the faintest strains of the band reached her. She seated herself on the short, thick turf that covered the edge of the cliff, and clasping her brown hands about her knees, settled herself down to enjoy the beauty of it all. She had not been there very long before the deep voices of men broke upon the quiet air; they were laughing immoderately about something.

Bonny saw them coming towards her—two men, both tall—but all the dazzling, yellow light was behind them, and against it they stood out like silhouettes. Bonny was clearly visible though, and Alec Doyle recognized the bronzed, piquant face and lissom figure at once.

"By Jove! There's that little girl I was telling you about," he said, lowering his voice. "A golden opportunity for improving the acquaintance. I'll meet you later on the pier."

So, when Bonny imagined they were passing behind, one stopped and spoke.

"I hope you have recovered from your fatigue?"

The girl looked quickly up and exclaimed—

"Oh, it's you! You did startle me!"

"Did I? May I sit down here for a few minutes?"

He waited for her permission, and Bonny hesitated. She felt it was not quite proper, perhaps; for though she and Lenore did not like conventionalities, they were not in the habit of picking up strange young men. In the train it had been different—but here, in South Bay. But it would appear so rude to refuse his request, after he had been so pleasant, too. She pulled up a tuft of grass, then looked at him, and he smiled.

"Would you rather I did not?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, quickly.

He threw himself beside her, looking at her all the time as no one had ever looked at her before.

"I thought you were going to send me away. I dragged my friend out directly after dinner, because I thought there might be some chance of seeing you. I never thought I should be so lucky as to find you all alone."

Bonny hardly knew how to answer this speech. Of course he did not mean what he said; but hitherto she had only been treated quite as a little girl, and now she blushed and looked so sweet and modest, the man insensibly drew a little nearer, and felt it would be a very pleasant sensation to kiss her round, dimpled wrist.

"I must be going home," she said, picking up the neatly-folded chemist's parcel. "It is getting late, see how dark it is growing."

The wonderful light was dying quickly away, vanishing almost as they looked.

"Stay just a few minutes," he pleaded. "Perhaps I have no right to ask such a favor; only you are so different from anyone I have ever known. You look so good, and you are so charming, I want to know you better."

The soft, low voice was a caress, and the deep heavy eyes were looking into hers as if they delighted in what they saw, and Bonny's heart gave a sudden flutter, like a poor little bird that is caught.

"I must really go," she persisted, standing before him, tall and slim, with her face demurely turned aside.

"Then you will let me walk home with you," he asked, springing up and tilting his hat over his eyes.

"Oh, no! I think not."

"Just as far as the road," he persisted, and so together they walked, side by side, two dark shadows in the now weird, grey, eventide. But the Bonny Adair who had walked so briskly into the town an hour or so before, never came back again. The Bonny that returned was filled with strange, wild thoughts that half frightened her because she could not understand them. A childish girl had run into the old, seaside town, and a girl with a waking woman's heart came home like a ghost through the evening shadows. Poor Bonnie Adair!

Lenore and Ted Charteris were late coming home that evening, so late that Mrs. Adair began to grow anxious, and kept sending Bonny down to the garden-gate to see if they were coming. Supper had been on the table some time, and the clock showed it was close upon nine.

"I shall not allow her to go out again," Mrs. Adair declared, fretfully, drawing the blind on one side, and seeing only the reflection of the lamp and her own face, which made her crosser still.

"Go and take another look, Bonny, and if they are not there, we will begin. I am quite faint for want of food."

Bonny stepped out into the cool, damp air, and leaning over the gate, fell to thinking over this new, beautiful dream of hers, and forgot Lenore, till the sound of a tattoo being beaten on the window panes reminded her what she had come out for. As there was no sign of the truants, she retraced her steps.

"There is no occasion for you to stop out all night," Mrs. Adair snapped. "Really, Lenore might have had more thought."

"There they are," Bonnie cried, pausing in the act of taking a chair as the garden gate swings to, and the next minute a very shame-faced looking couple came in.

"Well, you are nice people!" Mrs. Adair cried, but not nearly so tartly as before. She was one of those persons who calm down in a wondrous way once they came across the object of their wrath. "It's really too bad of you."

Then Ted Chateris, in a very frank and manly way, told Mrs. Adair that he had asked Lenore to marry him, and Lenore had said yes, and that they were very happy and hoped she would be pleased. Mrs. Adair cried, and said that she did not wish to be selfish, but that she should not live very long, and that she did not want to lose her daughters. In her secret heart she felt very proud and glad. Bonny, wondering and silent, took in the whole scene, and thought that, after all, it was a glorious thing to have someone to really love you. Though she could not bear the thought of losing Lenore, she did not grudge her this great joy.

CHAPTER II.

TED CHARTERIS did not leave South Bay the next day; he could not tear himself away from Lenore, so put off his return to business for a week. He was certainly no catch from a worldly point of view, being only a young and modest accountant, but his prospects were good, and he possessed £400 a year of his own; but still he and Lenore were not going to marry until the following spring. Till then—well, they were supremely happy, as they spent every minute they could together. Bonny watched them start for a sail in the morning; they certainly did invite her to go with them, but she had declined, and had the double pleasure to see their faces brighten.

After they had gone, she sat herself down on the sands beneath the shadow of an old boat, and lazily watched the people. It was the height of the season and the place was full of visitors. Two girls especially attracted Bonny's attention. They both had golden hair, which was arranged in a quantity of curls and coils; tiny, sailor hats were perched over their brows, and they wore natty yachting costumes of white and blue. A large Newfoundland dog walked between them as they paraded up and down. They were London girls, as one could see at a glance, were well got up, and fancied themselves immensely.

Whilst Bonny was watching and, truth to tell, envying them, two men came down and joined them. Bonny's heart gave a sudden and inexplicable throb, for one was her travelling companion, whose name she did not even know. She watched them now with renewed interest, saw that they did not shake hands, and had evidently met before. They stood talking and laughing, making fun of everything and everybody.

As Alec Doyle cast his eye over the various groups, he suddenly caught sight of Bonny, made some remark to his companions, then leisurely strode across the sands to where she sat. She tried to escape his notice by turning her head away when she saw him coming in her direction, but it was useless; he made his way straight to her, and threw himself down beside her.

TO BE CONTINUED.

DAINTIES FOR JOHN CHINAMAN.

Ah Sin Revels in Dishes Which Look Curious to Occidental Eyes.

Every day in New York you can see a score of pigtailed gentlemen in the neighborhood of Mott street each carrying a huge brown bag. If you could open these mysterious packages you would find desiccated shrimps and prawns, picked Amoy cabbage, delicate little tubers known as "ma-tai" bitter cucumbers, dried devil fish. Awabi clams from Japan, smoked oysters, preserved sharks' fins, pots of sweetmeats, funny looking sausages and lots of dainties for which there is no name in English. A poor laundryman will spend a quarter or a third of his income upon these luxuries, and will devote a half day of his precious time in cooking them in approved Mongolian style. The table is a queer work of art. The china and porcelan are superb, so beautiful that in this land of collectors they would be placed in cabinets. There are no knives and forks. The celestial mind regards cutting and carving a labor unworthy of a guest, and relegates it to a cook. In lieu of forks are chopsticks—long, slender bars of ivory tipped with silver or gold. The spoons are films of porcelain; the white glasses, cups like those in children's doll houses. Your plate is a saucer and your knapkin is a silk towel held by a servant. The table is handsome nevertheless. It is nearly covered with dainty plates containing hors d'œuvres piled up in slender pyramids. One pile consists of peeled bananas, cut into little drums; another of pineapple, carved into tiny bars, like miniatures of laundry soap; a third of crystalized dwarf organges, moistened in honey; a fourth of fine onion sprouts and a fifth preserved eggs, dark green and suggesting cucumbers. Other plates contain sliced sausage, pickled cocks' combs, hard boiled pigeons' eggs, sweet pickled shredded ginger, sliced water chestnuts, dried fish segments, desicated prawns, smoked fish roe, and a score of other and equally incongruous dainties.

You help yourself to any of these, both before and during the banquet. In the meantime the waiter or the "sing-song girl" has filled your teacup with fragrant Oolong and your winecup with boiling wine. From this point neither cup is permitted to remain empty nor grow old. If it stands longer than the time allotted by Mongolian etiquette it is removed and replaced by a hot one. After a few minutes of nibbling and sipping the courses began to arrive and continue to arrive as long as there is a soul at the board. Soups and stews, omelettes and entrees, roasts and boiled, ragouts and fricassees, croquettes and vol au vents, sweet dishes and sour follow one another without apparent rhyme or reason. At the end of every half hour you take a recess of from five to fifteen minutes. Everybody lights a cigarette or puffs a water pipe. A few retire to one of the bunks and smoke a pipe of opium. The "sing-song" girls perform a brief concert, vocal and instrumental, and again the meal proceeds. It is a poor dinner that has less than twenty courses. Some have forty and fifty, and a few passed the hundred mark. You eat what you please and as much as you please. Scarcely any dish is simple; some contain twenty ingredients. The average banquet uses pork, fresh, salt and smoked; pigs' brain, liver and kidney, chicken, duck, pigeon, quail and goose; fish, fresh, dried, salt and smoked; eggs of at least four kinds, rice, pastry, beans, peas, cabbage, millet, lentils, onions, garlic, leek, cucumber, squash, melon, gourd, potatoes, white and sweet; yam, ma-tai, bean, sprouts, spinach, turnip, parsnip, carrot, devil fish, dragoon fish, fish roe, clams, oysters, crabs, sea weed, mushroom and tree mushrooms, bird's nests, shark's fins, chilliss, orange peel, ginger, cocoanut, macaroni, and heaven knows what not.

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Woman—Yes, y'r honor.

Judge—But you have charged that your husband neglected you, starved you, and maltreated you most shamefully.

Woman—If you please, sir, I have just found out that the young woman I saw him with last week, was his sister.

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