

THE SWEETEST OF MEMORY'S BELLS.

Wild is the way through the woodland, but there are the sweet fields of clover, The sighing, sad pines and the jessamine vines, and the rill that leaps laughingly over.

And hark! 'tis the song of the reapers, and I know by its jubilant ringing There is gold in the gleam of the harvest and love in the hearts that are singing!

Let me pass through the wheat and the clover, O men and rose maidens who reap! I, who come from the sunset of the cities, like a child to its mother would creep.

As the birds when the storm winds are blowing, as the ships seek the haven from sea, And I fancy the violets know me in gardens of beauty and bliss,

The sun is still bright at the portal. There the love light all radiant shines. Heart, heart, there's a face we remember in the tangle and bloom of the vines!

Far off the glad reapers are singing—far off in the riverly wheat, And the arms of a mother are clinging and the kiss of a mother is sweet!

—Frank L. Stanton in Ladies' Home Journal.

A WOODLANDS TALE.

The valley is lined with woods for a long distance, but in one place, little more than two miles from the sea, there is a clear space, where the big house stands above its hanging gardens.

For 20 years an old man dwelt there, continually divided betwixt the love of the living, his daughter, and a passion for his dead wife that was forever drawing him toward the land of twilight wherein he pictured her waiting for his coming.

The lovers lingered a long time in the cool and pleasant air, and it was not till late that Rachel told her father of the thing which had fallen out that night, and the two received the old man's blessing.

They say that the tale of how he won his wife was as pretty as any ever written. His life hitherto had not been of the sort to inspire him with any overweening sense of his own personal attractions, and it did not occur to him that his present position could make a difference to the judgment likely to be passed on him by any young girl whose hand he might seek.

At any rate, he married a young wife and lived with her in the big house for some few months beyond a year. If he had died at the end of that time, he would have thanked the gods for the best life it was ever given to man to enjoy, but that was not the thing ordained.

She was a singularly lovable child, and his continual thoughtfulness on her behalf had the effect of making a like carefulness for others mere instinct in her. She was a child in virtue of her simplicity of heart, but her intercourse with others was all made up of little, kindly courtesies such as are in most of us the last refinements of art.

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and it would have been hard to decide whether the coming of holiday time, when she was at home once more, brought with it more of joy to him or to her. She grew tall and very beautiful. Her face was clear cut and of a type singularly patrician, but the whole expression was one of delicate graciousness, and her eyes looked out upon the world with the frankness of a beautiful child's.

At last the time of her schooling was passed. She was 18 when she returned to dwell in the big house, and then she became more and more a companion to her father, being in his company for the greater part of every day.

There came in due season a lover, but this did nothing to disturb the harmony of the household. In matters of learning, it may be, Eustace was not a fit companion for the father of Rachel, but he was a gentleman, like the other, and a man so made that you would have sworn he would remain a boy at heart no matter how long he should live.

In these days (it was early in the spring) the old man often sat toward sunset at the open window of his ground floor study, soothed into some sort of happiness by the voices of Rachel and her lover as they walked bareheaded in the gentle western air.

Eustace was a soldier on leave of absence visiting the home country, and the time was one when every man of that calling knew that the morrow might see him ordered abroad. Perhaps the courtship progressed more rapidly than it would otherwise have done because Rachel was aware of the shortness of the time of freedom allowed him and how he chafed at it.

"I am leaving in two days to join my regiment and go out to the Crimea. Since I have been in the west I have learned to love you. Will you let me go happy because you have promised to be my wife?"

"If that will make you happy," she said, "I will promise gladly. But, oh, I wish you had not to go!"

Afterward it was mainly Eustace who spoke, and his words, when they did not express a half delicious joy in her acceptance of his suit, were intended to convince her that her regrets were needless. It was his duty not only to go, but to go gladly, and he would fulfill that duty to the utmost, though he must of necessity leave his heart in England with her.

The garden descended the slope of the valley, and from the orchard at the bottom a pathway leads into the woods. It was this path the lovers took on the night of their farewells. The spring had come full early, and even the mulberries began to think of putting forth their leaves. In the woods the primroses shone everywhere, and many an open space was carpeted with bluebells.

"Let us stop here," said Eustace presently. "Do you remember when we found the place?"

"I have always known it," said Rachel. "It was my playground when I was a child, and sometimes I chose to fancy myself the sleeping princess and this the palace where I waited for the prince. I did not think he would ever come."

"My princess!" cried the man, kissing her as she sat beside him in the shade of a huge tree. "Out there I shall always think of you as waiting for me here."

"Come back quickly," she said in a low voice, "but do not think of me as waiting here. The place will be too empty without you. We will visit it together when you have come back."

"But you must not leave it unvisited," he said. "It is too dear to us for that, and you will be nearer to me here than anywhere else. Look down the path."

He pointed in the direction from which they had come, and her eyes obeyed the command.

"Some day," he said, "you will hear that I am coming, and you will make ready to meet me. But I shall not find you—I shall hardly seek you—in the house or in the garden. I shall come straight down to the wood and along the old path, and you will be waiting here. The time will seem long. You

will think I cannot be coming. Then, suddenly, a foolish blackbird will shriek away yonder, and in a moment I shall be here, and you will be mine forever."

Rachel turned her eyes upon him. "I am that now," she said. "I am yours forever. But, oh, come back to me quickly. Waking or sleeping, I shall be watching that pathway until you are returned."

"And I shall be thinking of you who are waiting for me here," he said. "Remember that, and be sure that I will come back to you."

The last of the birds had ceased from singing when the lovers rose and gritted Rachel's bower among the woods. They traversed the pathway slowly and came at last to the terrace. Eustace entered and said goodby to Rachel's father, and presently the lovers parted, and the young man strode out under the trees of the drive to the highway and so home.

The time which came after this parting may be guessed at by all who know how the war went. Rachel lived in a perpetual fever of expectation for the region wherein she dwelt was at that time isolated, and letters and newspapers alike came to hand all too slowly. She used often to visit the green glade in the woods, and though she maintained the outward serenity of her aspect, her father was not a little troubled on her behalf, seeing, despite her efforts at concealment, how love held back the penultima of her life until this man should be returned who had gone for an indefinite period into a place where men were dying daily.

"I dreamed of you last night," said the distant lover in one of his letters. "I dreamed that the day we are hoping for had come at last and that I was coming down the pathway to meet you in the woods. I found you there, of course, and I think you had grown more beautiful than ever. Do you wait in the woods?"

Rachel's answer was this: "I am always in the woods, whether in dreams or in the body. You could not come back, though it were ever so secretly, and find me not waiting."

But there came a time when she had no need to go down to the trysting place, since it was certain Eustace could not come to meet her there. The bitter winter that killed so many had almost gone from Cornwall, but in the Crimea its grip was still unrelaxed. Eustace had long since ceased to speak jestingly of the hardships suffered by himself and his brother officers, or indignantly of those that fell to the lot of the common soldiers. But, though he took refuge in silence, careful lest he should arouse her fears, the newspapers told her not a little of what he was suffering, and she dreaded the news that any moment might bring.

Some verses she had found in a foreign book were always in her mind: "All day, until the day's end, I await the message that is to come, and every footstep speaks of death. At night, sleepless, I say, 'What will the morrow bring?' and, in the morning, I think of all the days to come and wonder whether this day will be cursed or another. But the days are silent, until the time appointed. I await the message that is to come."

The letters came intermittently, and there was that in them—rather of things left vague than of things said—that sent Rachel often to the trysting place up the valley. The spring came very slowly, but the yellow primroses were out, and amid green leaves the young hyacinth had already a faint tinge of blue. She spent hours in the very place where she had sat with Eustace when they were together for the last time, and her heart followed her eyes down the woodland pathway and across the seas.

For at last there were no more letters, and as these failed to arrive the girl became every day more eager for the newspapers, more terribly afraid to open them because of the news they might hold. Her father watched her with a growing anxiety, and was forever seeking to allay her fears, while at the same time he was exceeding loath to give them the support that a recognition of their existence would have involved.

He was himself seriously afraid for Eustace, though there was no particular reason why he should be more unfortunate than his brothers. The old man saw anxiety and fear were telling on his daughter; that from a healthy woman she had become within a few days a mere bundle of nerves. One morning (known afterward as the day when Eustace got the wound that was to kill him) she suddenly uttered a loud cry as she sat at lunch with him, and it was long before she revived from the fainting fit which immediately ensued.

From that hour Rachel's condition became more and more a cause of solicitude. Her father was unhappy whenever she was out of his sight, and that was frequently, for something drew her to the trysting place among the woods, and early and late she would go down there and sit in the place where she had sat with Eustace, and where she had promised to await him whenever he should be able to return. Some hint of the state of affairs prevailing at the big house had gone abroad among the impressionable people of the countryside, and the glade where she waited was held sacred to her and sedulously avoided.

But at last (on the third day from that of her fainting fit and toward the end of the afternoon) she went down alone, and when it was dark she had not returned. For a long time her father suppressed his natural unrest, but presently he found that the servants were overcrossed, like himself by an indefinite

nervous dread. He determined to go down to the heart of the woods and bring Rachel home. One or two servants accompanied him, bearing lanterns.

A thin mist had dulled the sky and hidden the stars. They walked in absolute silence, and the night was like a huge empty house in which their footsteps echoed.

Fear was upon them, and a sense of something terrible impending made them waver betwixt eagerness to go forward and dread of what they were to come upon. On the edge of the woodlands the old man paused and cried: "Rachel! Rachel!"

A dull echo was the only answer, and they moved on in the direction of the glade. Once again the old man raised his voice and called upon his daughter: "Rachel! Rachel!"

But she answered to that call an hour earlier, when her lover came to meet her in the glade, at the moment of his death across the seas. She was sitting under the great tree where they had spent their last hours in life together. The radiant smile had not yet gone from her lips, nor was there any horror in the eyes that stared across the glade and down the woodland path by which he had sworn to come when he was free.—London Black and White.

A YOUTH'S ADVENTURES.

Which, Whether Truth or Fiction, Are Decidedly Interesting.

When riding in the tram car through the wildest parts of Peckham Rye, writes a contributor to the London News, with a friend—we were bound on a journalistic errand—a bronzed young man of marine appearance jumped into the car and at once recognized my companion. Before we had gone very far I was deep in one of the oddest family histories. This new arrival, it seems, when a boy of 14, had been possessed by the fear of consumption, that fell disease having carried off his brother and threatening his father and mother. Accordingly he read every book that he could lay his hands on dealing with the subject, and, as the result of his reading, ran away to Bournemouth to be near the pines. Having no funds, he engaged himself to a local fishmonger, carrying his master's fish to the various customers. When the day's work was done, he shouldered a hammock which he had brought with him and camped among some of those pines for which that southern health resort is famous.

One night a gentleman, sauntering along, smoking a cigar, noticed him, and, being amazed at this "al fresco" bed, entered into conversation with him. "Why, I know who you are," exclaimed the consumptive youth at last. "You're Mr. Louis Stevenson, the man who wrote 'Treasure Island.'" "How do you know?" said the gentleman. "Because I deliver you fish. You live at Skerryvore." "So I do," replied Stevenson, for he it was sure enough. "But you don't talk like a fishmonger's boy." "No more I do," replied the boy, and he then poured his strange secret into the novelist's ear, which was sympathetic enough, you may be sure.

The result of this odd meeting was an invitation to breakfast. "Oh, and I did eat," said the young man. He told the story so loudly that the whole train laughed. "And the servants couldn't make it out at all to see the distinguished author entertaining poor me. Then he went to Paris, and I never saw him again for a long while." The pines not proving strong enough, the strange youth was seized with a yearning for the scent of the eucalyptus and persuaded his friends to send him to sea. When he reached Sydney, he sold his outfit and ran away into the bush and lived in the open with eucalyptus galore. Thence, after many adventures, he sailed for the south seas and abode by reef and palm for many a long year.

One day when cruising as supercargo among the Gilbert islands, I think, a European swell in beautiful white duck, a great red sash and a spreading panama hat, with a peacock's feather in it, came aboard the schooner. "Good morning, Mr. Stevenson," said the supercargo. Mr. Stevenson looked and wondered who knew him in these faroff seas. "I don't know you," he said, shaking his head. "But I know you. Don't you remember the fishmonger's boy who ate such a big breakfast at Skerryvore?" "So I do. Well, the world is small indeed." And no doubt the two had pegs and tiffin—or whatever they call such things in the islands—together. What a strange, small world it is indeed! Well, one succumbed to the dread disease; the other is as hearty a fellow as ever I saw. It was a quaint, grim fancy to go dodging phthisis all over the world!—London News.

THE CRUMPET STORY.

The late Oliver Wendell Holmes professed to have a profound respect for the Dutch, possibly on account of what he used to call "the European aboriginals of America" being Dutch. He gave an aspect of slyness to his respect which inspired the idea that it was not untempered by humor, but he maintained that the Dutch, in spite of their stolidity, had a great deal of humor themselves. "For instance," he would say, "the crumpet story has a Dutch origin." "What is the crumpet story?" people would ask. And he would tell them that it had many variants, but the one with which he was familiar was about a man who was going to be hanged and was asked whether he had any last request to make and said he would like to have a dozen hot crumpets, very buttery, because he had never dared to eat more than one before.

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GOOD NEWS. With a view of enlarging the town of Lockport, I have divided my fine small plantation measuring five arpents front on Bayou Leferche, situated between Lockport and the Catholic Church, into town lots, which are offered for sale. Persons desiring to buy and to locate in that beautiful village should write or call on me for full particulars. P. BARILLEAUX