

"TOO LATE."

"There was nothing in the story!"
Thus the people said;
But they load her name with glory,
Now that she is dead!

"Were the verses worth the reading?"
Hush! she said to bread.
Every line seems full of pleading,
Now that she is dead!

Weary fingers, temples throbbing,
Heart that weighed as lead,
Eyelids used to slumber rubbing,
Ahi! and now she's dead!

Oh ye people, how yearning
Filled her soul with dread!
"Let me sleep," she moaned; and morning
Came, and found her dead!

Kindly judge, then, those who, living,
In her footsteps tread.
Praiseworthy, too late in the giving.
Come but to the dead!

—Chambers' Journal.

THE RUNAWAY.

"Would they put her in the asylum," she wondered, "if they caught her?"
Folks would surely think she was crazy.

She stopped at the stone wall to rest, and looked back timorously at the old familiar scene.

Far behind her stretched the meadow, a symphony of olive and green in the late fall. Here and there by a sunken bowlder stood soldiery golden rod, or berry bushes clothed now in scarlet and gold. At intervals in the long slope stood solitary trees, where fluttering, brittle leaves fell in the gentle chill air. In summer time she remembered well the hay makers rested in the shade, and the jug with ginger water she made for the men who kept there to cool.

She seemed, as she sat there, to remember everything. The house was all right, she was sure of that; the key was under the kitchen door mat, the fire was out in the stove, and the cat locked in the barn.

She held her work hardened hand to her side, panting a little, for it was a good bit of a walk across the meadow, and she was 80 years old on her last birthday. The cows feeding looked homely and pleasant.

"Good-by, critters," she said, aloud; "men's the time I've druv ye home an' milked ye, an' I'll uss let ye eat by the way, nor never hurried ye as the boys done."

With a farewell glance she went on again, smoothing as she walked the scattered locks of gray hair falling under the pumpkin hood, and keeping her scant black gown out of the reach of briars. Across another field, then on through a leafy lane where the wood was hauled in winter, then out through a gap in a stumpy fence, with its great branching arms like a petrified octopus, to the dusty high road.

Not a soul in sight in the coming twilight, John, the children, and the scolding wife who made her so unhappy would not be home for an hour yet, for East Mills was a long drive.

Down the steep hill went the brave little figure, followed by an odd shadow of itself in the waning light, and by tiny stones that rolled so swiftly they passed her often and made her look behind with a start to see if a pursued were coming.

"They'd put me in the asylum, sure," she muttered wildly as she trudged along.

At the foot of the hill she sat down upon an old log and waited for the train.

Across the road, guarded by a big sign, "Look out for the engine," ran two parallel iron rails, that were to be her road when the big monster should come panting around the curve.

At last the dull rumble sounded, a shrill whistle and she hurried to the track, waving her shawl to signal.

This, in the conductor's vernacular, was a cross roads station, where he was used to watch for people waving articles frantically. The train stopped, and this passenger was helped aboard. He noticed she was a bright eyed old lady, very neat and precise.

"How fur?" he asked.

"Boston."

"Git there in the mornin'," he said kindly, waiting for the money, as she opened a queer little reticule, where, under her knitting, wrapped in a clean cotton handkerchief, was her purse with her savings of long years—the little sum Sam had sent her when he first began to prosper in the west, and some money she had earned herself by knitting and berry picking.

At a cross roads, as they went swiftly on, she saw the old sorrel horse, the rattling wagon and John with his family driving homeward. She drew back with a little cry, fearing he might see her and stop the train, but they went on so fast that could not be, and the old horse jogged into the woods, and John never thought his old Aunt Hannah, his charge for twenty long years, was running away.

At Boston a kindly conductor bought her through ticket for Denver.

"It's a long journey for an old lady like you," he said.

"But I'm peart for my age," she said anxiously; "I never had a day's sickness since I was a gal."

"Going all the way alone?"

"With Providence," she answered brightly, alert and eager to help herself, but silent and thoughtful as the train took her into strange landscapes where the miles went so swiftly it seemed like the past years of her life as she looked back on them.

"They work is marvelous," she murmured often, sitting with her hands folded, and few idle days had there been in her world since she had sat and rested so long.

In the day coach the people were kind and generous, sharing their baskets with her and seeing she changed cars right and her carpet bag was safe. She was like any one of the dear old grandmas in eastern homes, or to grizzled men and weary women, like the memory of a dead mother faint in a hillside country ground. She tended bairns for tired women and talked to the men of farming and crops, or told the children Bible stories; but never a word she said of herself, not one.

On again, guided by kindly hands through the great bewilderment city by the lake, and now through yet a stranger land. Tired and worn by nights in the uncomfortable seats, her brave spirit began to fail a little. As the wide, level plains, lonely and drear, dawned on her sight she sighed often.

"It's a dreul big world," she said to a gray bearded old farmer near her; "so big I feel e'enmost lost in it, but," hopefully, "across them deserts like this long ago Providence sent a star to guide them wise men of the east, an' I haint lost my faith."

But as the day wore on, and still the long, monotonous land showed no human habitation, no oasis of green, her eyes dimmed, something like a sob rose under the black kerchief on the bowed shoulders, and the spectacles were taken off with trembling hand and put away carefully in the worn tin case.

"Be ye goin' fur, mother?" said the old farmer.

He had brought her a cup of coffee at the last station, and had pointed out on the way things he thought might interest her.

"To Denver."

"Wal, wal; you're from New England, I'll be bound!"

"From Maine," she answered, and then she

grew communicative, for she was always a chatty old lady, and she had possessed her soul in silence so long, and it was a relief to tell the story of her weary years of waiting to a kindly listener.

She told him all the relations she had were two grandnephews and their families. That twenty years ago Sam (for she had brought them up when their parents died of consumption, that kills so many of our folks) went out west. He was always adventurous, and for ten years she did not hear from him; but John was different and steady, and when he came of age she had given him her farm, with the provision she should always have a home, otherwise he would have gone away, too. Well, for five years they were happy, then John married, and his wife had grown to think her a burden as the years went on, and the children when they grew big did not care for her, she said had lived too long.

"I growed so lonesome," she said pathetically, "it seemt I couldn't take up heart to live day by day, an' yit I knowned our folks was long lived. Ten years back, when Sam wrote he was a doin' fair an' sent me money, I began to think of him; fur he was allus generous an' kind, an' the gratefulst boy, an' so I began to save to go to him, fur I knowned I could work my board fur a good many years to come. Fur three year he ain't hardly wrote, but I laid that to the wild kentry he lived in. I said b'ars an' Injuns don't skeer me none, fur when I was a gal up in Aroostook kentry there was plenty of both, an' as fur buffalors them horned cattle don't skeer me none, fur I've been used to a farm allus. But the lonesomeness of these mudders has sorter upset me an' made me think every day Sam was farther off than I ever cal'dated on."

"But what will you do if Sam ain't in Denver?" asked the farmer.

"I hev put my faith in Providence," she answered simply, and the stranger could not mar that trust by any word of warning.

He gave her his address as he got off at the Nebraska line, and told her to send him word if she needed help. With a warm hand clasp he parted from her to join the phantoms in her memory of "folks that had bin kind to her, God bless 'em," and then the train went rumbling on.

But many of the passengers had listened to her story and were interested, and they came to sit with her.

One pale little lad in the seat in front turned round to look at her now and then and answer her smile. He was going to the new country for health and wealth, poor lad, only to find eternal rest in the sunny land, but his last days brightened by the reward for his thoughtful act of kindness.

"She probably brought those boys up," he thought, "and denied her life for them. Is she to die unrewarded, I wonder? There cannot be any good in the world if that be so."

He thought of her and took out his poor purse; there was so little, money in it, too, every cent made a big hole in his store; but the consciousness of a good deed was worth something. "I mayn't have the chance to do many more," thought the lad, buttoning his worn overcoat.

SCENE IN THE BALLROOM.

It is in the ballroom that life centers. Imagine an immense gilded hall, along the sides of which run four rows of seats, covered with red satin, and rising tier above tier. At the bottom of the hall is a high gallery for the musicians; at the top is a dais raised a foot above the floor, on which gold chairs are ready for the princesses and potentates. Within the walls of that room are collected the rank, the beauty and the fashion of the "smartest" capital in Europe. The light of electric lamps is flashed back, soft, yet bright by glittering jewels, and shows the sheen of satin robes.

About 11 o'clock the band strikes up the national anthem, and the royalties enter in solemn procession. The Queen is rarely present. The Princess of Wales fills her place and is the center of all eyes as she glides in under her tall diamond crown, and takes her seat in the center of the dais. The Prince of Wales throws an air of jollity over all this splendor. His children follow him, with other royalties as happen to be in London. The ballroom never looks so well as when three royal princesses sit alone upon the dais with three diamond crowns like the fairies of childhood. The princess and young princesses do not sit in state, but hover round, and chat and joke with each other; while the ladies in waiting form a long, dull row behind, without a spark of interest in their faces.

In the ballroom two circles are formed for dancing—one in front of the royalties, and the other lower down. In the former only those are supposed to dance who are in the prince's set, or who claim his acquaintance. Before each dance the royalties hold a family consultation to select their partners, and literally lay their heads together as they glance round the favored circle. When the choice has been made, the lord chamberlain comes down with a message to the honored guest; the partners selected for the princesses come up and wait upon the door till the royal ladies descend and accept their guidance. The princesses stop down and approach their partners, who await their coming near at hand. Royalties, however, dance very much with each other. The square dances are much curtailed; in these the Princess of Wales never walks backward, but merely pauses until the music sounds another advance. Round dances have a charming effect. When the royal personages join in the valses all the other airy whirling figures melt suddenly away, while the princesses and royalties circle round along with their partners in the cleared space. Should you know a royal personage it is necessary to be on the alert lest they should look your way, when the lady must at once bend the knee with a swift ducking gesture. A man merely bows. The effect of this ducking as a prince passes on reminds one of a gust of wind bending a field of flowers.

REFRESHMENTS FOR GUESTS.

All this time refreshments are served to guests in out of the way corners. But soon after 12 o'clock the doors of the great supper room are thrown open, and the Princess of Wales rises to head a procession of royalties, which files down the ballroom between two lines of bowing guests. If you have been overlooked by royal eyes now is your opportunity. Watch closely as they pass, and you may yet touch a royal hand. Loyal souls accompany the princesses and potentates into supper, and stand at a respectful distance to see them eat. It is not etiquette to touch food until the greater personages are satisfied. These are very merry, particularly the Prince and Princess of Wales, who seem full of talk and airy jokes; with their children around them they give a pretty family feeling to the scene. The supper room is an interesting sight in itself, with solid gold plate of immense value arranged on and over the sideboard. When the royalties have returned to the ballroom the guests fall to upon the supper, which is excellent. After supper dancing continues, but elderly people begin to long for bed, and sink away unperceived. Eyes tire of all this brilliance, but it is not etiquette to leave while royalty remains. At the last the rush for carriages is fearful. How long it seems to wait in the dreamy vestibule, hearing everybody's carriage called except one's own. Ere you drive away day has broken and bathes a sleeping city in its calm, clear light.—London News.

Forgetful.

The emptiness of our common everyday salutations was never more neatly illustrated, perhaps, than in this little dialogue:

Brown—Have you seen Robinson lately.
Dumley—I hear he has been sick.

Dumley—Yes, I saw him this morning.

Brown—How is he?

Dumley—Well, I declare! I forgot to ask him. I just said, "How are you, old man?" and passed on.—Youth's Companion.

STATE BALL IN ENGLAND.

THE ROYAL ENTERTAINMENTS AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

A Lively Description of the Ceremonies Which Are Necessary Before Princes and Princesses Can Have a Good Time—Only the Very Elect Are Present.

Invitations to state functions are eagerly coveted and are distributed with eccentricity. Foreign ambassadors and representatives are bidden to all state festivities, viz., to two balls and two concerts every season. These invitations include the ministers in office, that kill so many of our folks) went out west. He was always adventurous, and for ten years she did not hear from him; but John was different and steady, and when he came of age she had given him her farm, with the provision she should always have a home, otherwise he would have gone away, too. Well, for five years they were happy, then John married, and his wife had grown to think her a burden as the years went on, and the children when they grew big did not care for her, she said had lived too long.

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Invention of Omnibuses.

The invention of omnibuses is due to the philosopher Pascal, who, in February, 1697, obtained a "privilege" or a patent for public carriages to travel through certain streets of Paris. They held eight passengers, who paid six sous each, and were very successful, although an act of the parliament of Paris forbade them being used by lackeys, soldiers and other humble folks