

## BACKWARD AND FORWARD.

BY E. NORMAN GUNNISON.

Thee strikes the clock. The year has fled—  
Thee with all thy hours half shed.  
Its voice of love, its hours half shed,  
It's for me, the joy of thy life.  
It's hours of gladness;  
And now Time fills the glass anew—  
God grant it holds no sadness.

For in the year that has been bright,  
And some have joined the silent dead,  
With all the dawn of hope,  
Will fill the day that droops to-day.  
With mirthful speech and laughter,  
And the world will smile away—  
God knoweth what cometh after.

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One day I found her leaning on a dead bough which crossed an opening in the wood, where all seemed of a delicate twilight green. She was listening intently to the song of a bird overhead, and, as I stopped short, gazing at the picture before me, I said to myself with a sigh:

"All that's bright must fade! My darling, I wish I had your likeness as you stand. Time flies," I muttered, "and the winter comes at last, with bare trees to the wood—gray hairs and wrinkles to the old."

She caught sight of me directly, and the scene was changed, for I was listening the next moment to her merry, happy voice:

"A day or two later I was in the city, where I always went twice a week—for I could not give up business, it was part of my life—when an old friend dropped in, and in the course of conversation said:

"By the way, Burrows, why don't you have your portrait painted?"

"Well," said my old friend, laughing, "I don't know, only that it would give a poor artist I know a job; and, poor fellow, he wants it badly enough."

"Bah! I'm handsome enough without being painted," I said, gruffly. Then, as a thought flashed through my mind—for I saw again the picture in the wood, with Cobweb leaning on the branch—"Stop a minute. Can he paint well?"

"Gloriously!"

"And is terribly hard up?"

"Horribly, poor fellow."

"How's that?"

"Don't know. He's poor and proud, and the world has dealt very hardly with him. It isn't so smooth with everyone, as far as we're concerned."

"True, Tom, old fellow," I said, "true. Well, look here; I'll give him a job. Would he come down and stay at my place?"

"He tried to speak, but could not, and turned away."

"All right," I said; "all right."

I patted him on the shoulder, and walked away to the window for a few minutes before I turned back to find him more composed.

That afternoon we all three went out into the wood, and I made Cobweb stand as I had seen her on that day.

"I'm sure you'll like him," I said, smiling.

"No wonder, papa, when I've been reading many advertisements. But do tell me, have you really found the place at last?"

"Oh, I am, dear, dear, dear father!" she cried, seating herself on my knee, and nestling her head on my shoulder.

"There hold up your head," I said, "and look at me. Now tell me frank-

ly, did you ever see such a weak, stupid old man in your life?"

"No," said I, laughing.

"With an extensive view of the Sur-

rey Hills!"

"Why, anyone would think you were a house agent, Cobweb," I said, smiling.

"No wonder, papa, when I've been

reading many advertisements. But

do tell me, have you really found the

place at last?"

"Yes," I said, "because you can tyrannize over them, and do what you please with them and make them your slaves, like you do me. A pretty rig I've been running this last two months to find a place you like—just as if I'd say, 'Oh, my lady, you'll have to be pains to make me comfortable down there, for I shall be as dull as lead,'

"It did not strike me then, but I remarked afterward that he seemed disposed to draw back from his proposal; but I was now so wrapped up in my plans that I could think of nothing but the picture in the wood, and I went home full of it, meaning it I'm going to paint it.

"Why, what are you going to do, then?" he said, in an astonished way.

"Let him paint little Cobweb," I said, chuckling and rubbing my hands.

"No," he said, "dryly."

"No fear of that. But you'll make a good picture."

"Stuff!" I said. "Do you think I'm going to be painted?"

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