

HE DIDN'T SELL.
I guess I'd sell the farm, Jane Ann, and buy a house in town; Jones made an offer yesterday—he'll pay the money down. He said he was axious, but he had the cash to spare, and recommended me that now-a-days cash sales are very safe.

The farm's a worth much, anyway; the soil is mighty thin.

And the *er* *er* *it* yields is hardly worth the putting of them on.

But this pecky railroad that they're putting through this way...

Will cut the old place up in two—Jones told me so to-day.

And afraid to work, you know—my daddy always says so.

"There's not a single laizy hair in Nebemiah's head."

There aren't no laizy hairs, I know, in that old head of his.

For I did the work of three hired men, in spite of him.

No, no, I'm not afraid of work—that I don't complain—

I've tried to work with'll hands, in sunshine and rain, and always been a cheerful face, except at times may be.

When the headstrong steers o' mine would "haw" when I said "gee!"

Perhaps it may be sinful for a mortal to find fault with toiling hard both day and night, if it only made his salt.

But I'll be a mite or laizy rain-lodged oats on the ridge hill over there.

That my cross was almost a foal for a small, hard-headed man to bear.

It's always been my custom, when plowin' stampin'—

Hum some good old-fashioned hymn—it sorta eased my toil.

Still I thought I ke-w my way, and was stepping on ward, though with caution, when my dress was clutched from behind, as I fancied by some bush; turning to disentangle it, I was confronted with what seemed an awful ap- partion looming through the misty veil, and with a suppressed cry, I stood still in a fright.

I saw a woman's form, bent with age, a face intersected with lines and wrinkles like a map, from which nose and chin stood out like mountain peaks, and the sunken eyes gleamed like very depths of two volcanoes.

"Slowly my lady!" she cried: "the gates of death are open before ye! Take my hand and let me lead you to that God, my bairn, that Elspsa was near you in your peril!"

I had heard of Elspsa as a woman who dealt in herbs and simples, but I had heard of her as one with an uncanny reputation. She was spoken of as the wise woman, but the words were uttered as if they meant "witch."

I confess I was half afraid to accept her guidance, but I clasped her foot, and my fears were strong as words gave me to understand that I had been walking toward a precipice, and three steps further would have borne me to destruction.

What landmark she had I know not, but I landmarks were few, and now he was dead too, and his will had consigned me, just like a bale of goods, to the care and guardianship of his brother, a doctor, whose home lay among the picturesque mountains of Cumberland.

I was "too impulsive," said the will, and would "throw myself and my money away before I knew the value of either, if I had no one to take care of me;" and so, when my poor father died in the South of France, where we had gone to the doctor. Right away he had come barely in time to lay him in the foreign grave, carried me off at once to his house on the bleak hillsides, gave me a kiss as he lifted me out of the stuffy vehicle which had conveyed us from the station, presented me to my aunt and cousins with a "Well, here's Adela!" and told me to consider myself "at home."

It was the beginning of January, intensely cold. The sudden change from a warmer climate had sensibly affected me, and I had been under all my furs, and perhaps more chilled by the retarding influence of my father's will, having pondered the "too-impulsive" all through the journey.

Certainly I was not "too impulsive" on my entrance to my new "home."

Aunt and cousins had met me on the threshold with warm welcome, pressed to remove my wraps and to make me comfortable. There was a huge fire blazing on the hearth, a tea-table piled with North Country luxuries, and all that should have made me feel at home; but nothing was wanting, and, instead of responding to their greetings, my own natural fashion, I dropped into a seat, after my first glance around, and covering my face with my hands, burst into tears.

I have small, thin, quick ears. I overhead Aunt Ritspon whisper to Bella and Winnie as she drew them back:

"Hush! It's but natural, poor bairn!

Leave your cousin alone, bairns; she will come to herself all the sooner."

And I did come to myself; but whether my tears had fallen frostily on their hot hearth, or we travelers had brought a chill in with us, or my own manner did not invite effusion, a certain air of restraint seemed to grip me, and I was slow to the room set apart for me, left to myself. I drew myself upon my bed and sobbed in passionate grief for my dead father, declaring that I was alone in the world, utterly alone.

And this feeling grew upon me.

I looked back, I am conscious that it was much my own fault that I had not responded with sufficient warmth and gratitude to the relatives who had made room in their household for one they had not seen since she was a baby, and had met with open arms and hands.

They had heard that I was gushing and floundering in a state of impulse, and finding me so erratic and ungrateful, concluded that I, accustomed to ole-gance and luxury, could not brook the homeliness and restraint of my new life.

I was rich, and they were not. They mistook my moribund melancholy for pride, and ceased to press their so ciety or attentions on me, lest I should attribute to them mercenary motives.

I see it all now, but then I was blind.

I had another grief at my heart beside sorrow for my dead parent, and I fear whenever I think of it, that I have to that lonely grave among the Pyrenees. I questioned the police who had isolated me from the world—the world in which my home lived and moved—and prisioned my free soul among those unresponsive walls of stone.

In this rhapsody I did not apostrophize alone the four walls of the solid stone house that set against the mountain side, with a background of pine, larch and mountain ash, looked so cold and gray, staring with its many lidless eyes from its rocky, perch above the straggling lake village, on the steep, unguarded roadway in front, and the narrow strips of garden ground stretching like a ribbon on either side.

They were to me the barrier between love and life, and happiness, but it was only on their solitary heights I found that they were the world—the world in which my home lived and moved—and prisioned my free soul among those unresponsive walls of stone.

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