

SPIRIT.
BY MARY E. B. CROST.
The birds are singing,
The grass is sprouting,
Up from its wintry bed,
The south wind blows,
And the sky is blue overhead.
The budding trees
Nod to the breeze,
In a grateful kind of way;
The insects hum,
And the bleating sheep
Make music all the day.
Down in the bog,
The mud is soft,
Are making a great harangue;
"Ker-thu," one goes,
He's the first to sing,
And never a jollier sang.
Down by the stream,
In the sunlit green,
The falconer lowers his bait,
A smile and a jerk,
And the poor fish knows its fate.

The violet and daffodil,
A thrill will bring;
When later comes the fall;
In this the trillins twine,
The sweet-spring time
With joy always hail.
PENFIELD, Mass.

TWO LOVERS.

BY FLORENCE H. BIRNEY.

Joshua wanted me to marry him, but I refused. He wasn't my ideal at all. I was pretty, and my friends assured me that I might pick and choose. But I had read so many novels, and my head was so full of romance that I wasn't inclined to choose any one of the tall, sun-hairied, freckled youths of Pikeville.

The ideal of my imagination had dark, flashing eyes, like the devil's wing, teeth like fangs, and a haughty smile. So, could any reasonable person expect to be satisfied with plain Joshua Hobbs, who was fair and freckled, with pale brown hair, and fat hands, brown with toil. But mother and Jane expected me to marry him, and I was very foolish to think of it throwing away such a chance, for, in spite of being very plain in appearance and manner, Joshua had made his way in the world, and was in possession of a very hardy farm and a good home.

"I cannot understand you, Leah; you appear bereft of your senses. There isn't another girl in Pikeville who would refuse Joshua Hobbs."

"Then he will find no difficulty in marrying," I replied. "I am sure I don't begrime him to anybody."

"So moral, so upright, so honorable in every respect," continued mother, as she staved away on Ben's diminutive pantaloons, which were suffering from a complicated, compound fracture of the knee.

"But, homely, mother, fearfully homely," I said.

"How can you say so?" cried Jane, whom I had always suspected of a warm feeling for Joshua. "He is very nice-looking, and will make the best of husbands."

"I wish Joshua had had the good sense to fall in love with Jane instead of me. She would have been so foolish as to refuse such an offer, and with me in such poor circumstances, too. But young men appear to care only for pink cheeks and curly, and marry women with not an idea above jewelry and ribbons. I did think Joshua knew better."

This was rather hard on me, but I did not feel vexed, for I knew mother was too angry to be entirely just, so I excused her.

We lived in Pikeville, a small, hum-drum, sluggish town, and had just enough money to enable us to live respectably and make ends meet at a minimum.

Mother had a righteous horror of debt, and we had to pinch a great deal, and deny ourselves any little extra extravagance in the way of a flower or a ribbon. There were five of us to support, and, perhaps, mother was not to be blamed for wishing to see Jane and me well married and in comfortable homes. She thought it really wicked in me to marry Ben, for his farm was almost the best in the country, and lay only three miles from town. I did not fret over the matter myself. I was too sure that my hero, the ideal hero of my imagination, would come along to claim me, and take me away from little gossiping Pikeville and Oba, to think that I had ever been wedded by a Joshua Hobbs!

I liked Joshua very well, but had no idea of ever marrying him. I was too vain to think my first offer would be very welcome, and was in Barstow for a few weeks on business.

On the 15th I arrived, my hero at the house of a Mr. Gaines, a great friend of my aunt. He paid me undivided attention, and my heart beat in a transport of joy.

The days now went by on golden wings, and I was the happiest of the happy. Mr. Fitz Allen was with me constantly, and at the end of three weeks proposed for my hand, and laid his wealth and heart (figuratively) at my feet.

My aunt gave her consent after requesting my Horatio to give her proper credentials of his nobility and honor. This he promised to do as soon as he should return to his home, which must be almost immediately, owing to the press of business.

I stammered, my thanks as my hero by his side in the direction of my aunt's house. How bitterly I regretted my flight! How unprepossessing I must appear in my wet, muddy clothes, battered hat, and clinging to the shattered umbrella! At my aunt's door he bowed, hoped I would suffer no ill-effects from my bath, thrust into my hand his card, and then like a ghost.

I ran up straight away, before attempting to remove my wet garments, and heard the name on the card: "Horatio Fitz Allen." What a delightful combination! How elegantly and patrician in sound. How widely different from Joshua Hobbs! Oba, to think that I had ever been wedded by a Joshua Hobbs!

My aunt laughed over my adventure, and said she had heard of Mr. Fitz Allen, who was reported to be very wealthy, and was in Barstow for a few weeks on business.

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The good resolutions are an honor to every heart, but they do not last. But the honest take to it, and a new lustre and that heart is nobler still when these resolutions are not broken.

Hearts have windows. They should be kept open at all times, that the glad sunshine of all that is true and beautiful in this life may enter and abide therein.

PITY with its crystal drops is sweetening many a cup of life. And, in return, many a grateful heart is laying on the palm of pity the choicest gems of gratitude.

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