

THE WEAVER OF BRUGES.

The strange old streets of Bruges town
Lay waste with frost and summer sun,
The tinkling goat bells now pastured
At milking-time, ere day was done.

An ancient weaver, at his loom,
With trembling hands his shuttle plied,
While roses grew beneath his touch,
And lovely hues were multiplied.

The slant sun, through the open door,
Fell bright, and reddened warp and woof,
When with dry of pain a little bird,
A nestling stork, from off the roof,

Some wounded, fluttered in and sat
Upon the old man's outstretched hand;
"Dear Lord," he murmured, under breath,
"Hast thou sent me this little friend?"

And to his lonely heart he pressed
The little one, and vowed no harm
Should reach it there; so, day by day,
Cared and sheltered by his arm,

The young stork grew apace, and from
The loom's high beams looked down with eyes
Of stony love upon his ancient friend.
As lone ones might sympathize.

At last the loom was hushed; no more
The deftly handled shuttle flew;
No more the westering sunlight fell
Where blushing silken roses grew.

And through the streets of Bruges town
By strange hands cared for, to his last
And lonely rest, 'neath darkening skies,
The ancient weaver slowly passed;

Then strange sights met the gaze of all;
A great white stork, with wing-beats slow,
Too sad to leave the friend he loved,
With drooping head, flew circling low.

And are the trampling feet had left
The new-made mound, dropt now slow,
And clasped the grave in his white wings,
His pure breast on the earth so brown.

No food nor drink could lure him thence,
Sunrise nor fading sunsets red,
When little children came to see,
The great white stork—was dead.
—Wide Awake.

THE SHADOW RENT.

BY SARA B. ROSE.

It was in the days of log cabins and mighty forests, of red men and of wolves; when the women spun and wove their own linens and flannels; when the block schoolhouses did duty for churches as well as schools; and when the paring bee and husking frolic were the social events of the season, that Prudence Harrington sent around her younger brother, George, to inform the young people of Smoky Settlement that she was to have a paring bee the next Thursday evening.

The young fellow mounted a large white ox, which had been trained for a saddle-ox, and took a large conch shell under his arm, which was an heirloom in the family, handed down from some seafaring ancestor, and departed, riding first to one log-cabin and then to another, and inviting all that were single, from 15 to 25 years of age; for in those days "trundle-bed trash" and "old maids" and "bachelors" were classes of people with very few rights.

George's method of invitation was rather original, and consisted in bringing his ox to an abrupt stop in front of the cabin door, and blowing a loud blast on his trumpet, which brought all the people, young and old, to the door, and then the invitation would be given without the young courier alighting from his novel steed.

Hope and Mercy Anderson were spinning, each upon her little flax-wheel, in the large living room of their father's log cabin, when the sonorous sound of George's trumpet was heard, and Mercy jumped quickly up, regardless of the snarl into which her thread was being tangled, and ran quickly out of the door where George was sitting upon his patient ox. Hope followed more slowly, and Mr. Anderson also peered out of the open door:

"Prudence wants you to come to a paring bee at our house next Thursday evening."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed the light-hearted Mercy, almost dancing a jig. "It's the first one this fall; of course we will come."

"Daughter, daughter," remonstrated old Jeremiah Anderson, smiling, "do not be so giddy."

"We will accept the invitation with pleasure," said Hope, in a more formal manner.

"Who is going to be there, George?" asked Mercy.

"All the young folks in the settlement," answered George.

"Then Mr. Devine is also invited?"

"Mercy!" exclaimed Hope, in a shocked voice, "how could you ask such a question?"

"Because I would not give a continental to go if there were not going to be some people there with some life in them."

"Simon Goodenough will be there undoubtedly," said her father, gravely, with a quiet suggestion in his tones. "Yes, every one of 'em is asked. Miss Mercy," said George, with a droll glance sideways toward the lovely young belle of Smoky Settlement; and then he gave his quaint smile a cut with his whip and went galloping off upon his journey.

"Mercy," said the elder sister, with rebuke in her soft eyes, "I hope, if we go to Prudence's paring bee, that you will conduct yourself in such a manner as to provoke no jealousies, least of all in the heart of Simon Goodenough."

"What is Simon Goodenough to me? All I ask of him is to let me entirely alone, then I could have some peace of my life."

"Simon Goodenough is a most exemplary young man, and a minister's son, and would be your own true lover forever; while William Devine is a stranger, a great lover of gaudy dress, and has even been known to dance among those who care not for that which is pure and good," said Hope, flushing and her eyes kindling.

"Then why don't you take the pions Simon yourself? And what if Will Devine is a stranger? We were strangers when we came to Smoky Settlement. What if he does love gaudy clothes? So do I; and, oh! wouldn't I like to dance if I only could get a chance."

"Ah! my daughter," said the old man, sighing, "I fear you do not sufficiently reverence things that are truly religious."

"Father," said Mercy, playfully, "what if I should prove to you that in my liking for Will Devine I revered things more religious than I would if I adored Simon Goodenough."

"Ah, my daughter, I fear you could not succeed in that."

"But I can, father; for if I worshipped

Mr. Devine, my worship would be Devine worship, while if it was Sime Goodenough, it would be only Goodenough worship."

And with this wicked speech she ran laughing back to her wheel.

Hope looked at her father with frightened eyes at this daring speech, and the kind-hearted and religious old man came forward and patted her head, saying: "You are a good girl, Hope, a good girl, and you must add your prayers to mine, that your sister, my youngest darling, may be brought into the fold before it be too late."

The night of Prudence's apple bee was a fine one, and all the boys and girls assembled to part the bright red and golden apples and to quarter and string them ready for the large racking by the side of the fireplace.

First and foremost among the merry maidens was Mercy. An erson, who entered into the work as well as the amusement of the evening with the most lively zest.

The girls commenced paring at five o'clock in the afternoon, and at seven the young men began to come in by twos and threes, clad in their stout homespun clothing, and each with his gun upon his shoulder and his knife in his belt.

Conspicuous among these was Will Devine, who wore clothing of a better cut and material than the others; and his dark eyes and gentlemanly bearing were very different from those of the tow-headed and untutored sons of Smoky Settlement.

Soon after the young men were comfortably seated there arose a strife among them, for the one who could peel an apple without breaking the peeling was given the liberty of throwing it around the neck of the girl he liked best, and claiming a kiss as a reward.

The rivalry ran high among the young swains. Many an apple was carefully peeled, only to break just as the owner was sure of victory; but at last two young men were almost simultaneously successful, and they were Simon Goodenough and Will Devine.

"I declare, they both have one, and at the same time, too," cried out Prudence. "Which shall claim his forfeit first?"

"We will give Mr. Goodenough the first chance," modestly replied Mr. Devine.

Simon darted a triumphant glance at the speaker, and advanced to the corner where Mercy sat industriously stringing apples.

"Don't hinder me," she cried, warningly.

"Wal, I swan to man I will," answered Simon.

"Before you'll put that thing around my neck, I'll break it all to pieces," said Mercy, defiantly.

Simon continued to advance, and Mercy sprang to her feet, dropping her strings of apples, while the log cabin rang with merriment.

"Don't you dare to," she cried, angrily.

"I will, though," answered Sime.

But Mercy sprang forward unexpectedly, and seizing the apple paring-bone, broke it into half a dozen pieces and stamped them under her feet.

Sime stood, with the remnants in his hands, looking stupidly silly, until the laugh subsided and some one said:

"Well, Sime, you've lost your chance, and now, Will Devine, try your luck."

"I am almost disheartened by the bad luck of Mr. Goodenough," said he.

But Mercy gave him such a roughish glance that he appeared to take courage, and advanced to a group of young ladies who sat near Mercy, and was seemingly undecided which to choose, when suddenly, with a dexterous move, he threw it around the not unwilling neck of pretty Mercy.

Sime looked on, green with jealousy, while Mercy put up her lips and received a rousing salute, amid general laughter and clapping of hands. This was too much for poor Sime, and he took his hat and left the house, while Hope rose energetically from her seat and sat down by Mercy as if to keep her in order the rest of the evening. But love laughs at locksmiths, they say, and willful little Mercy departed that night under the escort of Will Devine, and Hope was obliged to accompany her, as no other gallant offered himself who possessed the necessary religious qualifications.

The aged father had sat up for his daughters, and a bright fire burned in the fire-place, which he had kept up for their comfort, and, after bidding Mr. Devine good-night, the three sat discussing the events of the evening, and Mercy was as usual receiving an indulgent scolding, when there was a hurried knock at the door and Will Devine's voice called:

"Let me in, in God's name!"

Never was human being turned from that door who called in that name, and Mr. Anderson opened the door to see Will Devine, dripping with blood, and with a huge knife in his hand.

"What is the matter, my young friend?" he asked in alarm.

"Some person sprang at me as I was going through the wood, and I struck at him with my knife, and I think wounded him, but I'm afraid I'm hurt in return."

"What is Simon Goodenough to me? All I ask of him is to let me entirely alone, then I could have some peace of my life."

"Simon Goodenough will be there undoubtedly," said her father, gravely, with a quiet suggestion in his tones.

"Yes, every one of 'em is asked. Miss Mercy," said George, with a droll glance sideways toward the lovely young belle of Smoky Settlement; and then he gave his quaint smile a cut with his whip and went galloping off upon his journey.

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"Then why don't you take the pions Simon yourself? We were strangers when we came to Smoky Settlement. What if he does love gaudy clothes? So do I; and, oh! wouldn't I like to dance if I only could get a chance."

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"Ah, my daughter, I fear you could not succeed in that."

"But I can, father; for if I worshipped

looking Devine in the face in the sternest manner, "have you murdered my son?" The young man turned white at the fearful question, and stammered out:

"I have no knowledge of your son, sir."

"And yet," said Goodenough, severely, "my son left Harrington's house on that night of the apple bee, and has never been heard of since. And you dragged yourself wounded and bleeding to this house, and say you know not who was your foe. Nay, young man, you know with whom you fought. Was it my son? And oh, where have you lain him?"

"Sir," answered Devine, "as I said before, I have no knowledge of your son. I certainly met some being outside this door, who stabbed me cruelly. I drew my knife and freed myself; this is all I know. If it was your son, he attacked me; and I have no knowledge of his whereabouts."

This was all Devine could say about it; and so there was no proof, only suspicion. There was no action taken in the matter, only the country round about was searched for a new-made grave; and the report went out that the two men had met, had quarreled, and that Devine had killed Goodenough.

Three years after Prudence Harrington's apple bee, Mercy had changed into a quiet, reserved girl, and Will Devine was as much a recluse as it was possible to be in a populated district like that of Smoky Settlement, when suddenly another sensation swept over the little hamlet. Old Jeremiah Anderson was said to be in a trance. For two weeks he had lain in an unconscious state, looking exactly like a dead man, but yet there was the slightest pulsation. Nourishment was given him, in the form of soup introduced into his stomach by means of a tube. Hope and Mercy were at their wit's end and the doctors could do nothing for them, and the report spread far and near, and many an ox team was yoked and brought loads from a distance to see the strange sight of a living body from which the soul had departed.

The daughters kept their tearful watch until the beginning of the seventh week and one night Will Devine sat watching, with Mercy by his side, for the girl would not give up her lover; when the pale hand of the unconscious man was raised, the mild blue eyes opened, the wan lips moved and said:

"Send for the minister."

Mercy cried aloud in her joy for her sister to awaken, and Devine caught his hat and departed for the Rev. Mr. Goodenough.

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