

RURAL FELICITY.

BY H. S. KELLER.

The chestnuts they are snapping
On the rosy-tinted bower;
The maid is in the cellar;
Where her papa he did send her
To draw a mug of cider.
To bring some candies, poppins,
Some doughnuts and some ginger snaps
To fill the eve as chip-end.

The hired man is greasing
His kipskin with the tallow,
The horses are all fatly
'O'er the butter-maker's callow;
The little boy is pinching
Poor pussy's tail in antics;
The grand dame she is trying
To thread a needle frantic.

The horses they are rubbing
Their noses 'gainst the manger;
The cock is softly cau-tioning
The shadows on the hillside;
Are turning into black;
The young folks they are hurrying
From candy frolic back.

The watchdog he is barking
At the moon above the maple;
The tramp is softly drawing
The look out o' the staple;
The water wheel is silent;
The pigs lie close together;
A most convenient modus
Operandi in cold weather.

PEGGY'S DOUBLE.

BY MATTIE GORDON.

There's no use talking, Rose; I can work all day long and live on such quails! Black, muddy coffee, heavy is that I would defy the strongest mach to digest, and such cooked es—Je-whit-taker! I can't abide it!" And, after kicking the dog several es, and venting his anger on the inoffensive cat by giving her a over-gentle rap with his cane, he nmed the street door after him, leaving the astonished Rose to digest his tirade at her leisure.

What should she do? She had never tried to do any cooking in her life, this was the consequence. The neymoon had scarcely expired, and she stood with great tears rolling in her cheeks, the beauty of her complexion destroyed by her vain effort to prepare a dainty meal, and, of all, the first harsh words that passed her husband's lips since her marriage, had been uttered, while left her in anger. She sank upon sofa and cried aloud.

When the floodgates of grief had set, she arose, and, bathing her sobbing temples and swollen eyelids, in the act of performing the daily tine of household duties, when a id peal at the door-bell caused her to drop her dish-towel and wonder who caller might be.

Her pale face and slight figure met her neatly, though plainly, clad in a of gray serge, set off by a dainty he of white at the throat and wrists, le a knot of cherry-colored ribbon nmed the former; a spotless white on completed the attire.

Please, ma'am," came almost apologetically, "Mr. Caruthers sent me here to trial, saying as how you wanted to a girl to do general work for you, I will suit you, for I understand kinds of work, but I've never hired before, my lady."

"Come in!" Rose said, a glad expression looking out from her dark, blue, "and we shall soon be able to do that point beyond a doubt. Can cook?"

Yes'm! My mother has been cook gentleman's family for years, and says that I am very passable."

That is good. When can you come—let me see, what is your ie?"

Peggy, ma'am!"

When can you come, Peggy?"

I will begin now, my lady, if you ie."

Very well, then," said Rose, noting siringly the modest droop of the eyes over the meek gray eyes, "you may wash the dishes and tidy up room."

Then the master of the house came dinner he was met at the hall door radiant and forgiving face, while air of soft arms wound about his, and a pair of rosy lips pressed to reminded him of former days of

how does your servant suit, dear?" the question, as they proceeded to dining room arm-in-arm.

She is altogether too perfect for dings" was the extravagant answer. Peggy is just an ideal of laundress, woman, and, Oh, you must taste cooking, Henry."

Very well! I am glad that you have had such a prize, Pet," he said.

nd the dinner was certainly a less-fit food for a dyspeptic, ik, juicy and tender; potatoes, ly, and not overdone; light biscuit caused Henry Caruthers' impair-appetite to blossom forth with reed vigor; the cottage pudding was ly delicious, while the pie-crust d not be excelled for flakiness.

spirits rose with his appetite, his ty laugh ringing out loud and r, until Rose was disagreeably surprised when the half hour had expired, it might continue forever. The kiest was simple in its construction home to appear like far-d elysium to Henry Caruthers, ere imprinting the parting kiss, aid to his wife:

One week from to-night, love, there is a grand hop at Mrs. Truman's; is the card of invitation which I read to day. We must certainly cal to go."

he evening arrived, and great was his anticipation for the coming st. Henry entered his wife's room before the time, and throwing all package upon her dressing

remarked, carelessly: "There is a slight token, Rose, dear; let them to-night to please me."

As before, the only word that Henry Caruthers could utter was: "Strange, stange, strange!" And the mystery deepened.

Upon leaving his office one noon to go to dinner, he was startled at beholding a figure crossing the bridge and coming toward him, strangely familiar.

"How are you, Peggy? Are you leaving for good?" he asked, as he noted the good-sized bundle in her hand, enclosed in a large yellow bandana.

But she hurriedly drew her veil down over her face, and passed him without vouchsafing him even a nod of recognition.

"By George! gone off in a huff," he ejaculated, gazing back at the now dis-

tant Peggy. "I wonder what she has been doing now, to arouse my lady's displeasure?" he mentally added.

But, what did it mean? Surely that was Peggy crossing the hall from the kitchen to the dining-room.

"I shall investigate this matter ere the sun was shining brightly in the dormer window when she awoke the next morning, and the breakfast-bell was ringing for the second time. She found Henry awaiting her arrival with a little frown disfiguring his handsome face, as the rolls and coffee had been served and were cooling upon the table.

"I did not know but you were still dreaming of your diamonds," he said, a little jealousy.

"Oh, no, indeed; you do me injustice, Henry. I declare to you that they have not, even for one moment, entered my thoughts since I unfastened them last night after the ball. I am not quite so vain, I hope," she said, with a pout of her red lips.

"Well, never mind, Puss," he rejoined, as he kissed away the pretty pout. "Come now, we will break our fast, and after that I will remove your new jewels to the bank, as I am on my way to the office, and lock them up in the casket with the others, for they are the pure stuff—warranted."

As soon as they had finished their repast, Rose ran gayly up to her room, time with her dainty slippers to the waltz she was humming as she went, and bursting in ran straight to her dressing-table confidently, to grasp the precious diamonds. The next moment her face assumed a blank, puzzled expression, as she stood riveted to the spot.

The diamonds were not there.

She placed her hand to her forehead in a dazed manner, striving to recall some other place in which she might have secreted them.

But, in vain. She felt as sure of casting them upon her table as that she was awake when doing so.

Had burglars entered her chamber? Impossible! The windows were all fastened securely, and the doors all locked.

She stepped to the landing, and in a faint voice called "Henry."

He ran wonderingly to her, noting with anxiety her white face.

"Why, Rose, have you seen a ghost?" he queried, assuming a playful tone.

When told what had occurred, he gave a prolonged whistle, while his first suspicion started while it angered her.

Peggy! Such an idea! That honest countenance allow her hands to commit a theft? Never. The thought alone seemed wholly preposterous to her mind.

"No, Henry, she never did it! I could swear that Peggy is innocent," Rose said, with positive assurance.

"Nevertheless I shall call her, and allow her the privilege of protesting her ignorance of the affair," he said, suiting with her the action to the word.

But, no; he felt that Rose must be right in vindicating Peggy's cause, when he beheld the clear, honest gray eyes unflinchingly deny the unjust accusation, while the lips unfalteringly proclaimed her entire innocence.

"Strange! strange! strange!" was his only comment, as he left the room.

Later in the day, as Rose sat pondering on the strange disappearance of her diamonds (she thought of little else now), a slight circumstance recurred to her, which had taken place just after her husband had left the room the night of the ball.

After kissing them several times, she had looked around, ashamed of her folly, when a pair of keen gray eyes, with an expression of gloating admiration in their depths, were fascinatingly fixed upon her treasures, through the door, slightly ajar.

She remembered now the start of confusion evinced, undoubtedly occasioned by her (Rose's) sudden change of position.

And yet was it not very natural for Peggy, in passing the slightly open door, to peer in, and, having done so, pause to admire the dazzling brilliance which must have caught her eye?

She refrained from relating the incident to Henry, for fear of rekindling the slumbering suspicion.

A bright light dawned on the mind of Henry Caruthers. This, then, accounted for the light he had seen there, and cleared, in his mind, the remainder of the mystery.

"I will fetch her," he said, and left.

He soon returned, leading Polly by the hand.

Polly wrote rapidly the answers to the questions put to her, and her story coincided in every way with the one Peggy had told, but when questioned as to the manner in which she had committed the theft, Peggy sprang forward excitedly, while she exclaimed, with flashing eyes:

"She never did that! It was who stole the things, when you were absent from the room, and wrapped them up for her. She merely received the bundle from my hands in the attic chamber, and carried them home. They are all there, now, unharmed. Oh, sir, do not blame Polly." And Peggy wrung her hands entreatingly.

"My poor girl," Henry Caruthers exclaimed huskily, while his eyes looked moist. "You both have been more sinned against than sinning. I will send some one to recover the articles, and will make this proposition to you: Peggy, I will take you back again into my employ, and give your mute sister a home on one condition, and that is, that you swear here before a witness that you will never repeat the crime, but always strive to be honest."

Peggy was too much astonished for a time to answer. That any one should trust her after her acknowledged theft never occurred to her. She sprang forward impulsively, and grasping her benefactor's hand before he could restrain her, she covered it with her tears and kisses.

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"To provide for my sister was all that tempted me!" she exclaimed, brokenly.

"Run, Rose, and ascertain if she is in the house now," he said, impatiently.

She did go, returning in a second, her countenance as puzzled now as he had been a moment before.

"She says that she has not been from the dining-room since I left her," Rose said, in an awed tone.

As before, the only word that Henry Caruthers could utter was: "Strange, stange, strange!" And the mystery deepened.

"Indeed, miss, and what reason have you to believe me equal to this re-hance?"

"Well, ma, you see Glibtongue is the new coroner for our district, and as pa's political aspirations are all dead, I can insure them a very quiet inquest if you humor me."

"I presume I'll have to humor you, my dear."

"That's a dear mamma! and, besides, you always said I had such killing ways, and it may be that a coroner in the family won't prove such a deadhead to us after all."—*Yonkers Gazette*.

It was late that night when the ball broke up, and Rose Caruthers, tired and weary, unfastening her shining jewels and tossing them carelessly upon her dressing-table, hurriedly disrobed.

The sun was shining brightly in the dormer window when she awoke the next morning, and the breakfast-bell was ringing for the second time. She found Henry awaiting her arrival with a little frown disfiguring his handsome face, as the rolls and coffee had been served and were cooling upon the table.

"I shall investigate this matter ere the setting of to-morrow's sun," he determined, as he silently entered and took a seat at the table.

In consequence, toward evening of the same day, Henry Caruthers was privately closeted with a proficient detective, to whom he explained as explicitly as possible the facts in the case.

The next day, as Rose was engaged with some fine needle work in the little sitting-room, she was certain that she heard some one sobbing, and other sounds of distress from an adjoining bedroom. She hastily opened the door communicating, and saw Peggy in great distress, sitting upon the side of the bed, which she had begun to make up.

"Why, Peggy, you poor child! What is the matter?" exclaimed the warm-hearted Rose, placing her hand upon the girl's bowed head.

"I can't tell you, ma'am! You would despise me. I can't tell any one, leastwise you who have been so kind to me."

"But, where are you going?" she asked, observing Peggy donning her cloak and hat.

"I have to go down town, my lady. I am sent for."

And Rose, on glancing through the half-open door, saw for the first time a man standing in the hall, dressed in a blue detective suit.

In a few words he explained to her his painful duty; that of arresting Peggy for theft. He had come to conduct her to the station house.

The evening before he had tracked her from the house where she was employed, away beyond the city limits, and had there lost trace of her. That morning she had stolen in at the back entrance to the Caruthers domain very early, ere the family were astir, minus the bundle which she had borne away with her.

Peggy, amidst expostulations and entreaties, was searched, all to no purpose. When questioned as to how she came by the bundle so frequently seen with her, and as to their contents, she maintained a confused silence, while her eyelids drooped guiltily.

"Peggy," and Henry Caruthers' tone was stern and commanding, "the sooner you explain this matter the better it will be for you. Are you guilty or innocent of the crime?"

Peggy hung her head for a few minutes thoughtfully, then expressed her willingness to confess all that she knew of the affair. Her story is as follows:

"My home is five miles away from here, to the east. My family consists of a father and twin sisters, besides myself. My father, sir, is an inebriate, spending all our earnings in liquor; he is very quarrelsome, and never thinks of doing one stroke of work, so that, sometimes, my sister and myself find it difficult to make both ends meet.

"My twin sister, sir, is the very counterpart of myself in appearance, but she is deaf and dumb. I am very sorry, sir, but I could not resist the temptation of taking the things, although I knew it was stealing. I began to think that you were so well off that perhaps you might never find out what became of them and that the crime would not be as bad as when taken from a poorer person."

"Where is your sister, Peggy?"

"In your house, sir, in the attic chamber, she is waiting for me."

The Use and Abuse of Fun.

What should we be without this gift to brighten our existence on our earthly pilgrimage? A love of fun is most often accompanied by a cheerful and lively disposition. We can imagine no drearier state than that of an individual who, during the whole of his lifetime, can obtain no fun or pleasure in the slightest degree, in his daily intercourse with his fellow-creatures. But it is a well-known fact that even of the best of things one can have too much. Even fun has its limit, and a more wearisome thing can scarcely be imagined than an individual who, at the most inappropriate time, cannot refrain from turning the most commonplace of conversation into fun and ridicule.

This is certainly a great failing; but of course there is a graver aspect under which it can be regarded, namely, the love of ill-natured fun. A laugh raised at the expense of a well-meaning person is highly injurious, and in many cases really forgotten. The turning into ridicule of another person's words and ideas in a most uncharitable and hurtful habit, when long forgotten by the speaker, rankles in the mind of the victim. There is nothing more disagreeable to a very sensitive nature than the fear of being made fun of or turned into ridicule, and the very slightest inclination toward this unchristianlike habit will cause the victim of it such pain and shrinking of the sensitive mind would scarce deem possible.

We should be especially careful of these sensitive ones, the more so as one can never tell the harm a careless word leveled in mere jest may do.

It rankles in the mind of the sensitive one, and gives pernicious precedent to the hearers, which happily is not general, and brings its own punishment.

It is evident that if Jones was sincere in his belief that there was nothing but water in the bottle, he could have no objection to drinking the contents at one draught.

The Chairman and brethren thought this a reasonable proposition, and put it to Jones accordingly. Jones was evidently not quite prepared for this crucial test of his belief, but could see no way out of it.

After a little hesitation he consented. The contents of the eight-ounce mixture were transferred to a tumbler, and he quaffed them off. The doctor then intimated to the Chairman that he might proceed with any other business, until the medicine had time to take effect.

After the lapse of about an hour Jones began to exhibit signs of internal disturbance, and a basin was brought in for his convenience.

It soon became manifest to the brethren that there must have been something more than water in the mixture.

The doctor submitted that he had effectively upset both Jones and his allegation, and quitted the lodge in triumph.—*Chambers' Journal*.</