

### MY OPEN GRATE

BY SAMUEL WILLIAMS COOPER.

Ch! sing to me not of your wood fire so charming,  
'Tis unsatisfactory, that I know well;  
It sometimes looks well, but 'tis useless for warming,  
Ott smok's and gives out an abominable smell.  
I revere in my nature the good days of olden,  
But now give me things that are not out of date;  
For iron, give me trinkets of silver or golden;  
For wood fire, a warming, hard-coal, open grate.

II.  
When a green log of wood on the andirons was smoking,  
How p' easant it was to get down on your knees  
And blow till you gasped, while with dust you were shaking,  
And daughters down the chimney compelled you to sneeze.  
No longer need sparks fly around in the gloaming,  
And burn the new carpet and uproar create;  
No longer with ax in the back yard we're roaming;  
We cosily sit by our warm open grate.

III.  
Why cut down the forests where birds' nests are hidden?  
In no green smoking log can a poet find soul,  
The ancient wood-fire but discomfits was bringing.  
True poetry now is found only in coal.  
By a register even a poet may ponder  
And warmly weave rhymes with a mind that's elate;  
Of the many inventions that cause me to wonder  
The best of them all is my open coal grate.

### PETER WHITNEY'S FATE.

"Mr. Whitney?"  
"Sir?" replied the individual addressed.

"I want you to cross to France this evening."

"Very well, sir," said Mr. Whitney, quietly.

"Or to-morrow morning will do. Here are your instructions. Read these papers carefully; make the best arrangements you can. I may want the house—you will see all about it in these documents."

"Am I to purchase the premises, sir?"

"No, no; they have come to me—to the firm—in consequence of an advance made by my old partner, who, you know, died the other day. Take possession; see what the place is like; whether it will do for a summer residence. You know the kind of thing I want to take the children to, and I can depend on you."

Mr. Whitney bowed and said he thought Mr. Barnstone might depend on him. He took the deeds, made his arrangements at the office, tidied and tied up his papers on his desk, and then strolled homeward at three o'clock to pack his portmanteau. He was a man of about forty—good-natured, trustful, and trustworthy—a man of whom little children always stopped to inquire "the time," and were satisfied even if he did not drag out his watch—a man who piloted old ladies and blind men over dangerous London crossings—a man beloved by animals and children, and who cherished an affection for a cat, which followed him as faithfully as a dog in and about his house at Brixton.

Such was Peter Whitney—a somewhat impulsive man, like his great namesake—a person deserving of every confidence in the legal employment which he pursued, but not likely to make a very large fortune in anything—he was too easy-going as well as too good-natured.

Mr. Peter Whitney strolled homewards, first to Ludgate Hill Station to take a train to Brixton, where in bachelor apartments he passed his quiet evenings. He was crossing Chancery Lane, by the post-office, when a young and decidedly pretty girl, a French girl, stopped him, and said in broken English:

"Sare, would you be so kind?—you look very kind—could you tell me where I can find the Lincoln's Inn Fields?"

"Lincoln's Inn, mademoiselle; mais certainement; je—"

"Ah! monsieur parle français," she exclaimed, interrupting him with a pleased expression.

Then Whitney, who was a French scholar, addressed her in her native tongue, and walked with her a few paces in order to put her in the right direction. So they went through Lincoln's Inn, chatting, and he found her destination was none other than Mr. Barnstone's office.

Having parted with his young companion at the office, he hurried away to Ludgate again. He had learnt from a slip of paper she gave him that the fair foreigner's name was Pulcherie Malais, but he did not inquire her business in Lincoln's Inn Fields after he had announced her arrival to the clerk in charge.

"A very pretty girl indeed," murmured this middle-aged bachelor; "a charming face; and what a pretty name! Pulcherie; quite fitting, too, for a wonder. Malais is not so nice, but it may one day be changed. Ah me!"

Thinking of Pulcherie, Peter Whitney entered the train; still thinking of her, he went home, and packed "Pulcherie" in his portmanteau. But somehow that young person escaped, for she was with him all the evening—in the train to Newhaven; she crossed the channel with him in the Normandy, and reached Dieppe with him in the warm autumn daylight, as bright and fresh a memory as ever! Oh, Peter, Peter! truly thou art in love!

The premises which Peter Whitney had to investigate and arrange for were situated some little distance up the coast, at or near a village which boasted a small river and a fishing population of amphibious habits. The place shall not be more particularly described, but the river flowed through the valley of the Ange, and the stream and the increasing village bear the same name.

Fishermen, dealers in cattle—for the valley is pastoral—lace-makers, these

are the inhabitants, and they follow their peaceful occupations contentedly. It was a very fine morning when Mr. Whitney reached the village; he had walked over from Dieppe the day after his arrival in that town, and found the people *en fête* in the village.

It was a holiday—a holy-day, apparently, for the inhabitants had just come from the church, and the girls were dressed in holiday garb, walking in picturesque groups; laughing, chattering, and while avoiding, yet glancing saucily at the young men, who, standing or seated, also in pairs or threes, would discuss the fishing and the cattle, while always keeping the young ladies in sight. A happy, pleasant picture; and Peter Whitney looked at the scene with great delight.

He determined to give himself a holiday, too. So he made friends directly, and inquiries indirectly concerning the premises he had come to take over and have transferred. He learned that the house lay away from the village; it was a mere farm-house amid trees, inclosed by a wall and paling. It had been untenanted some time. The family had sold everything, and quitted the village some weeks before.

"They were poor?" suggested the Englishman.

The man addressed shrugged his shoulders as he replied:

"Well, not entirely. The good man and his wife had died. His sister and their daughter lived in the house till the last harvest. The son was away in the army of Africa. Young Mr. Desmoulins assisted us, for he pretended to love Pulcherie, monsieur; and I, like a fool, went away and left her. His attentions aroused the fears of my aunt and sister. They wrote to me. I was in the South; I could not come. Then they found the wretched Desmoulins had a claim on them; he broke up their home. Oh, monsieur, I wish I had died!"

Peter Whitney noticed that the young man felt very bitter against the young Desmoulins, and feared he would proceed to violence, so he said:

"Never mind; I can explain it. M. Bernardin is dead. Julius Bernardin was the partner in my patron's office. I have come to claim the property. I will manage M. Desmoulins. Leave him to me."

A sudden inspiration had seized the middle-aged bachelor lawyer. He had already a romance; he would find Desmoulins and Pulcherie, and then— So he persuaded the young soldier to return with him, and assume his civilian attire; to quit the army if he liked afterwards, but first to come to England and find Pulcherie and the kind aunt. After much parley, this was all agreed to.

Next day the lawyer called on M. Desmoulins; found him a bully and a *roue*; quelled him by stern threats of exposure in the tribunal and in the village, where he was hated. Finally, he succeeded in getting from him a quittance of all claims, and, with the French *avocat* who had accompanied him, took his leave.

In fifteen hours he was in London. The business had developed into a romance, and Peter Whitney was as eager as a boy.

"Then you do not think the place will suit me," said Mr. Barnstone, after talking the matter over. "It is dull, quiet, not near the sea. No; I will let it to some young couple who want to live and love alone. They may have it for a song. It's no use to me, and only a farm-house after all!"

"May—I—have—the—refusal, sir?" asked Peter, timidly.

"You, Whitney, you? Are you going to be a Benedict, after all? Well, I am surprised. My good sir, certainly. You are a faithful, good fellow. Take it as a wedding present. It will cost me little, remember, and may do you good," he added, hastily. "No thanks, please."

"Miss Mallys wants to see you, sir," said a lad at this juncture.

"Let her come up," said Mr. Barnstone. "My charming French client," he added: "You shall see her. She is connected with this very house—my tenant. Ah! here she is."

As he finished speaking, Mademoiselle Pulcherie entered with a little woman, whom she called "ma tante." She at once greeted Peter Whitney, and in broken English and more volatile French explained to Mr. Barnstone and her aunt alternately how she had become acquainted with the "monsieur."

"Then you actually directed mademoiselle here?" said Mr. Barnstone. "If you had known, you might have saved yourself the journey. Have you any news of your nephew, madame?"

"Alas! no; he was in Africa, in the 144th of the line. He will come and find it desolate—our home. We must return, monsieur, to Dieppe. You have been an angel to us, indeed."

"Not a bit, madame, only doing my duty; in this instance a positive pleasure. Have you—pardon me—all necessary for your journey?"

"Madame need take no journey to see her nephew," said Peter, in French.

"How, monsieur? Is it possible—he is—he is dead?"

"No, madame; alive, well, and in London. He returned with me; I will bring you to him. I met him near the old home yonder."

Then Peter, in his plain but sympathetic way, told his story, and the ladies' eyes filled with tears of joy and happiness.

"Go," said Mr. Barnstone, wiping his spectacles. "Run away, good people; I am busy."

So they went and found Antoine, as had been promised, and after awhile the three returned to Dieppe. The following month, plain, good Peter Whitney crossed the Channel, and spent three weeks in France near his new friends. Lo and behold! the year after the old farm-house was again inhabited; not by Antoine, who had gone away on promotion—an officer; not by the kind aunt, for she lay in the village church-

yard; but by "M. and Madame Veet" [about 6,377,000 the world over.

Pulcherie! ma belle sœur, ma pauvre petite!"

"Pulcherie your sister! Not Pulcherie Malais?"

"The same, monsieur. How could you know? You are English," said the astonished Frenchman.

"Yes; but I am also interested in this house and in her. An English firm owns the property; the rent has not been paid; the former owner, an Englishman, is dead; all is chaos; but your sister—"

"Yes, tell me of her."

"She is in London—was in London a few days ago."

"Then Peter Whitney told the young man of his meeting with the young lady, and of his having escorted her to Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"Ah, yes! it is there her benefactor used to live. She has, no doubt, gone to him. Our aunt knew him well. He was a lawyer—an *avocat*!"

"What! an English solicitor? What was his name?"

"Bernardin—M. Jules Bernardin—he was our friend. He helped us; he assisted my father—my poor father—and lent him money on security. Then mon père, he died, and my mother already had passed to heaven. My sister and my aunt remained. Young Mr. Desmoulins assisted us, for he pretended to love Pulcherie, monsieur; and I, like a fool, went away and left her. His attentions aroused the fears of my aunt and sister. They wrote to me. I was in the South; I could not come. Then they found the wretched Desmoulins had a claim on them; he broke up their home. Oh, monsieur, I wish I had died!"

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yard, as they were called, who had come for "their honeymoon."

So Peter Whitney, the "old bachelor," met his fate—a charming wife and some fortune—in Pulcherie Malais—all, as some think, "by the merest accident," but you and I know better.

### Furniture for Millionaires.

There is some wonderful furniture that I have seen. The suite consists of two very large couches, a piano, music cabinet, tables, chairs, footstools and curtains. They are designed and made for a New York millionaire, who has given no limit so far as price is concerned, so that the very finest material and the most skilled work have been secured. The designs are by Alma Tadema, whose picture, "A Reading from Homer," now in the Academy, is to be hung in the drawing-room for which the furniture is intended. I hear rumors of friezes and panels by Sir Frederick Leighton, of Roman sculptors at work upon the marble for the same fortunate room, and of other details, which lead me to the conclusion that if money is the root of all evil, it is also the root of all art.

The couches, chairs, and stools are upholstered in silk of a beautiful shade of pure gray, traversed by bands of exquisite embroidery in colors which are rich, but carefully subdued, as one sees them in Mr. Tadema's pictures. The ground of this embroidery is also silk, the color being precisely that of the bloom of a ripe plum. Upon this the tints of gold and orange, blue, red and brown, with slender curved lines of pure white, giving a peculiar delicacy to the whole, form a beautiful scroll-pattern. A rich trellis fringe of mingled gray and gold runs along the edges of the couches, and beneath it is a deep silk fringe of the plum-bloom color, which does not show, except in the effect of depth and richness it imparts to the upper fringe.

The woodwork of all this is simply incomparable, being a mixture of cedar wood, ebony, ivory and boxwood, inlaid with the finest mother-of-pearl to be had. Wherever there is a corner, a swan's head is carved out of the ebony, large carbuncles forming the eyes. The labor of bending the ivory has been immense, for it is essentially a brittle substance. On the arms of the couches there are long, curved lines of tapering ivory, which gradually approach each other closely at the base, but gradually increase the interval of width as they rise.

The piano is not yet completed. The upper part of the musical cabinet is a copy of an Asiatic temple. The pillars are of fluted cedar-wood, the delicious red-brown of that beautiful wood coming out with great effect by reason of the carving. The capitals are carved ivory in a mellow tint of warm cream color. The rest is ebony inlaid with various woods and with exquisite mother-of-pearl, which glitters like jewels. The curtains that veil the recesses intended for holding the music are of gray silk embroidered in soft, rich colors, a lyre occupying the center.

A large curtain is also of gray silk, with a curious embroidered dado, the ground of which is plum-bloom silk with a quaint design in sections, in each of which is a straight piece in blue and red.

The round tables are too lovely. The woodwork matches that of the other furniture, but is not a repetition. In fact, no two designs are precisely alike. There is something to study in each back of a chair, each side of a stool, each arm of a couch. The tops of the tables are of Algerian onyx, and they are like bits of golden sunset caught and fixed to be a joy forever. So delicately, purely, transparently, effulently pink is the ground of one of these, as practiced by the Scythians two thousand years ago. "Most curious it is," he says, "to see here the lassoing and taming of wild horses as it is practiced at the present day by the Guachos of South America; and not only, so but in the minuteness of the details we observe characteristic parts of the method of horse-breaking which but a few years ago was introduced into England by Mr. Rarey, and excited so much wonder and curiosity. In the center of one side two wild horses are peacefully grazing on the plain, still in the enjoyment of their liberty. Next they are lassoed by the Scythians, and finally brought to the ground. In the center of the front of the vase is represented the method employed by Rarey. A Scythian is engaged in strapping up one of the forelegs of a horse, which he will presently bring on its knees by another cord, and, by wearing out its patience, show that he is the master (these cords were originally fine wires of silver, which were found beside the vase when it was first discovered, but have since been lost). To the right of the last-mentioned group stands a horse already broken in, and sadd