

SUNSET.

In childhood days, long years ago, Far from the busy town, The happiest hour I used to know Was when the sun went down; For then I'd labor's cares dismiss And speed with heart elate To win a "Welcome home!" and kiss From mother at the gate.

Now, in the afternoon of life, As evening's shades draw nigh, Again I see the sun go down Without a single sigh; And when at last it sinks to rest I'll ask no kindlier fate Than a welcome kiss at sunset From mother at the gate.

—Frank S. Pixley.

FOR HIS SISTER'S SAKE.

"Hush! I listen! Didn't you hear the breaking of a twig?"

As the words were whispered the speaker spread out his arms to arrest the progress of his three companions. Under a stunted tree they crouched, listening for the faintest sound.

They were poaching, Jim Hawel and three others thrown out of work by the closing of the pits, and poaching on the most dangerous estate that they could possibly have chosen for their operations. For Hopsey Grange belonged to Col. Traite, a sportsman extremely jealous of his preserves and notorious as the sternest J. P. in the county.

But times were bad and for food for themselves and their men will dare anything.

"You're mistaken, Jim. There's nobody about. It was only a fox or something stirring in the underwood."

The three men moved out in the open again, and Jim followed them uneasily.

Truth to tell he didn't half like the job, although it had conjured a rabbit into each of his capacious side pockets. It was his first experiment in poaching, and horribly nervous he felt ever since he set out on the expedition.

"Jim, you'll never take to this night work like the others, will you?" his sister Bess had pleaded. "True, we're hard up for food, but, though you say I'm weak and ill, I can share with you till the pits open again. It can't be long, and we'd better starve than you get sent to prison."

Of course Jim had promised that he would do nothing of the sort. But when he remembered his sister's pale face, and noticed how, day by day, her cheeks got thinner, the sight of the rabbits and pheasants that played, even in the country roads about which he and his mates wandered all day long to while away the weary hours, was too much for him; and that night after Bess had gone to bed, Jim stole noiselessly from the cottage and joined the others at the gate of Hopsey's Copse.

And now the others, well satisfied with the result of their night's work, were stealthily making their way back again.

A bright moon floated in the clear sky above, but in the woods a silvery mist arose amid the dark shadows of the trees and shrubs, rendering all objects hazy and indistinct.

Crossing a broad patch of light, Hawel, still haunted by this strange unrest, glanced back at the woods behind; and, as he did so, his heart gave a thump as some half a dozen figures, throwing black shadows on the moonlit ground, dashed from the cover of the bushes.

"Look out, mates! The keepers!"

The others gave one look round, then broke into a run. On the hard ground the footfalls of their pursuers sounded plainly in the ears of the startled poachers.

Then came a voice. "Stop, or we'll fire!" And, as the four still tore blindly on, the report of a gun sounded out, echoing in the woods around, and with a cry of pain the rearmost man dropped to the ground with a charge of small shot lodged in his legs.

How it happened Jim could hardly say, but a second after he and the others were fighting hand to hand with the keepers, exchanging murderous blows with fist, stick and gun. They were but three and a wounded man to six, and in a few minutes the fight was over. A blow on the head stretched Jim Hawel senseless on the ground, his mates were speedily overcome, and, additional aid having been summoned, the captives were taken away through the woods and lodged in the stone lockup.

"And you, James Hawel, what have you to say for yourself?"

Jim Hawel, standing before the magistrate with his three fellows, didn't know what to say. The other Judges, taking into consideration the fact that the men were out of work, and that great distress prevailed in the district, were evidently inclined to adopt a somewhat lenient view of their case, especially as the men swore that the keepers had fired upon them before being in any way threatened; but Col. Traite, displaying his usual severity, and easily swaying his less strong minded colleagues, promptly frowned upon the slightest suggestion that any mercy should be shown to the delinquents.

"James Hawel, have you anything to say?" he asked, sternly.

Jim shuffled his feet, trying to find words for the thoughts that came readily enough to his slow brain. The eyes of all present were upon him, but he saw only the face of his sister, who, lying ill in the little cottage, he knew was waiting with feverish eagerness for the result of the trial.

"I'd like to say a lot, Colonel, your Honor," stammered Jim, "but I ain't no good at talking. I was there right enough on your land, and the rabbits was yours. But, Colonel, p'raps you've never been starving and seen food running about wild, and yet you mustn't touch it. 'Twasn't for myself I stole it. I'm a man, and short commons for a bit don't frighten me; but—and here his voice faltered—"I've got a sister at home, and dry bread and little of it don't lengthen the lives of folks as is ill."

"Hunger does not justify theft," retorted Colonel Traite, harshly.

"And what about the brutal attack on my keepers?"

"It was their fault, Colonel. They fired—"

Colonel Traite held up his hand impatiently.

"We've heard enough of that," said he, angrily. "You fellows won't make your case any the better by pretending you've been ill treated. You are a set of lawless ruffians, who take advantage of a temporary closing of the pits to rob other people, and, when caught in the act, would not hesitate at murdering the men who detect you. While I am on the bench, property shall be protected and the laws of the country rigorously upheld. You come into our grounds, and, if you are not stopped, will soon be entering our houses. I shall pass upon all of you the severest sentence it is in my power to inflict."

Colonel Traite looked round at the other magistrates, and no one ventured to oppose him. But, as the men were being led away, Jim Hawel stepped back, and, in desperation, played his last card.

"Colonel," said he, "may I say another word?"

"Well?"

Your Honor, my sister is very ill. When she hears of this the shock may kill her. You yourself have a daughter about her age. Think—"

"Take him away," said the Colonel, coldly.

Then, as they hustled him from the court, Jim Hawel, his face white and set, turned his head again, and through the hall the fierce words rang:

"I'm going, Colonel Traite; but so sure as I live to get my liberty again, I'll be even with you!"

And for that speech Jim got an extra week.

Jim Hawel lived to regain his liberty, and, when again he was free, a dark hatred rankled in his heart.

Sister Bess had had a bad time of it, but buoyed up by the hope of seeing Jim again, she struggled bravely with her illness, and though she had to give up the cottage, managed to live on somehow on the charity of her wealthy neighbors till the happy day came when Jim was "out."

The pits were working again, and Jim easily found work, and to Bess the trouble seemed to be over. The doctor, too, said that with plenty of nourishment she might possibly, in time, get quite well again.

Had she known the desperate scheme that had been hatched in the brains of her brother and his three comrades her recovery would have been even slower. For brooding over their wrongs, those four men, their hatred of Col. Traite burning in their hearts, had vowed upon revenge. And the man who had been shot had suggested a means of which all approved. Hopsey Grange was to be set on fire.

"The house is an old one," said he, gleefully. "Once fairly started nothing can stop the flames. I've done odd jobs about the place, and there is a stable chock full of hay and straw close to the new wing that will, when the wind blows from the west, burn the house to the ground with the striking of a single match."

For a week or so the conspirators made no move, but when they could do so with safety one or another of them was continually spying around the house, so that in the darkness no mistake might be made.

Then one evening, as the crowd of them came trudging home from the pit, four of them exchanged meaning glances, for a strong wind was blowing, and the weathercock on the roof of the Town Hall showed that it came from the west. At 9 o'clock under a tree in a lonely lane the same four met, and a surprise was in store for them.

"Mates," said Jim Hawel, hoarsely, "you know that I'm no coward. The white feather ain't much in my line, but I tell you, I can't do this job."

"What?" they gasped, in chorus. "I can't do it," repeated Jim. "I'll tell you why. You know my sister Bess? I've got her in the world to care for; and if I come to grief it'll finish her. The poaching business she's only just managed to get over, and I tell you, for her sake, I can't risk this. Alone I'd fire the Colonel's place and tell him as how it was me as did it; but, with her alive it ain't no good. B'lieve me not, the hate of Col. Traite sticks as deep in me as ever it did, and, as I swore, I'll be even with him yet; but just now my hand ain't free, and I must wait."

The three men, muttering to themselves, stared at him. The man who had been shot shook angrily a pint tin of paraffin that he carried and rattled a box of matches.

"A nice bit o' backing out this is, Jim Hawel," growled he.

"I can't do it," said Jim. "But my mind's made up. If anything like this happens I'll be the first to suffer after having threatened him, and I don't want no revenge that falls hard on Bess. And there's another thing," he continued bravely. "The Colonel's daughter is there. Her bedroom is right on top of the building. P'raps she'll be killed in the fire. Won't you give up the whole business and wait till we can go kill the Colonel alone, with no chance of damaging other people?"

The man who had been injured turned on his heel.

"Come along, mate," said he; "tain't no good jawing with him. We three will arrange a little do on our own account for another night. And you, Jim Hawel, you go back and sit by the fire along o' Bess."

But, after they had gone a little way, the three stopped again.

"It weren't no good going against him," said the same man. "After all, he's right to look after the gal. But that don't matter to us, eh? Jim ain't the man to round on his mates. What do you say to having the little flarup, after all?"

The bell in the steeple of the church had just struck 11, when in the darkness of night a flickering, uncertain light sprang up on a hill a mile outside the town. Soon after the electric bell in the fire station connected by wire with Col. Traite's house rang out the alarm, and a few seconds afterward the quiet that had settled on the little town was ex-

changed for a noisy hubbub as the shout went around: "Hopsey Grange is on fire!" For, undetected by dog or man, the three plotters had entered the grounds, gained the stable, carefully removed a shutter, and silently poured the oil they carried over the straw that was packed within right up to the very windows.

Then the man who carried the matches struck a whole handful on the box and hurled them upon the saturated straw. Instantly a blaze sprang to the roof, and by the time the three had gained the road outside the grounds the stable was alight from end to end.

Promptly as the engine had turned out, and eagerly as the driver had urged his horses along the country road, the Grange was half consumed when the firemen first arrived.

Mounted on wheels and on foot, the people were arriving in hundreds, gazing awestruck at the blazing pile, or forming long lines to hand up buckets of water.

Col. Traite, in bed and asleep when the fire reached the house, had been almost suffocated before he was discovered, and being carried out in an unconscious condition, was just now reviving.

The fire escapes, slower than the engine, had arrived, when turning to the crowd of frightened, half clothed servants, the chief of the gremen asked:

"Are you all here? Is any one left in the building?"

Col. Traite, returning to his senses, heard the words.

"My daughter!" he gasped. "Is she out?"

At that moment a window, high above the flames, was thrown violently open, and with a scream for help a white robed figure leaned out, its arms extended toward the crowd below.

"Amy!" screamed the father as he saw her, running toward the building as if to catch her if she fell.

"Don't jump!" shouted the fireman above the roaring of the flames. "Do you see the escape coming yet?" he asked,

Far down the road, at the bottom of the hill, that was illuminated by the light of the fire, the tall red ladder was to be observed approaching slowly. The fireman glanced up at the window where stood the figure of the girl, behind which a dull, murky light had now begun to glow.

"It will be too late," said he. "And by the staircase it is impossible to reach her."

Then Col. Traite turned in his despair to the crowd behind him, and in a loud voice he cried:

"A hundred pounds to the—!"

He stopped suddenly. Some one had seized his arm,

"Look!" they cried.

And a tremendous shout burst from the excited crowd as, at that topmost window, the figure of a man appeared, and a blanket was thrown around the form of the girl whose doom seemed sealed.

A moment this man looked down as if meditating what to do and then, catching the girl in his arms, he disappeared.

"It's Jimmy Hawel!" exclaimed one.

Into the hall of the burning building the firemen crowded, mounting the stairs as far as the conflagration would allow.

There was a crash, a burst of flame and smoke, and a whole flight above collapsed, hurling Jim Hawel and his burden onto the bottom landing.

Her hair singed, the blanket that enfolded her already smoldering, Amy Traite scrambled readily to her feet, but her rescuer did not rise.

Quickly they carried him out to the fresh air and tore off his burning clothing. Into a wagonette that was handy he was trundled, Colonel Traite seized the reins, and with Amy, wrapped in many coats, sitting behind him, raced back to the town.

Into a bedroom in the best hotel Jim was carried and medical aid immediately summoned. Sister Bess was also fetched to tend her brother.

Next morning the patient was so far recovered as to be able, while lying in bed, to hold an informal reception, and wheeled to the window to bow his head in response to the cheering of the people assembled outside.

And when all the others had gone and only Bess remained, a gray haired man entered the room and threw himself on his knees by the bedside. And as he pressed to his lips the hand of the injured man, he gasped in his emotion.

"Jim Hawel, you have kept your word. You are even with me now!"

Cork and Its Uses.

A large quantity of cork is exported annually from the district of Spain to the United States, the lesser purveyors being England, Italy, France and the Spanish colonies. The cork forests are situated in Gerona, one of the four provinces comprising the principality of Catalonia. The trees grow from 300 to 400 years, and become productive at an age of about twenty-five years. The bark is then removed, and thereafter the operation is repeated every twelve or fourteen years.

The greater part of the bark is made into cork for bottles, the rougher part being reserved for rustic decoration. The fishermen also employ the coarser pieces as floats for their nets. The articles manufactured from cork comprise handles for bicycles, cigarette mouthpieces, shoe soles and visiting cards. A very warm and lasting flooring is also made from layers of cork. The cuttings and residue generally are ground to powder and used for packing fruit, and if it is not good enough for this purpose it enters into brick-making for building purposes.

How to Acquire a Bass Voice.

Ferrari, the celebrated composer, relates the following anecdote in his Memoirs. On a cold December night a man in a little village in the Tyrol opened the window and stood in front of it, with hardly any clothing on his back.

"Peter!" shouted a neighbor, who was passing, "what are you doing there?"

"I am catching a cold."

"What for?"

"So I can sing bass to-morrow at church."

HOW IRON IS MINED.

Processes That Have Come Into Recent Use.

Back in the hills of the Bald Eagle Valley of Pennsylvania can be found the most productive ore mines that exist in any of the Northern States, says the Pittsburgh Dispatch. The manufacturing in that section seemed to commence as soon as the first settlement was made, and now there can be found some of the most interesting and historical facts concerning the early manufacture of iron in its every stage of completion, from the time it leaves the mine as ore until it reaches its last finish as true steel.

It was here in this valley that the charcoal blast furnace, once so popular, but now almost unknown, made its initial appearance in 1865; but everything has undergone a change since that time, and now the only thing left to mark the once popular mode of manufacture of iron is one small wooden structure which is the charcoal blast furnace, the place where the grandfather of the late Gov. Curtin made his first start in life as an ironmaster.

In the place of these once famous furnaces there have been erected chill blast furnaces of a more modern kind, but the old mines are still as productive as they were a hundred years ago, and from all indications are likely to continue so.

In ancient times it was the custom to mine ore to dig straight down to perhaps a depth of 100 to 1000 feet, and then strike out and take up the vein from the base of the pit; but this has been done away with entirely, and the only plan now carried into effect is to first remove the surface of useless gravel, and then to mine the entire contents, which plan makes mining practically as safe to man as almost any other work. Of course, the new plan is a trifle more expensive, as the ore has to be gone over by men and boys, so that all the flint can be taken out. However, this slight expense is more than made up in the end, as mining by the modern methods can be carried on all winter, which formerly was impossible under the pit, or single vein system.

Down into the depths of the mine nearest to the "washer" of a group of mines is run an incline of heavy plank at about an angle of 45 degrees, on which a double track is laid; at the top of this incline is the engine room and dumping house, while the empty car goes down on one side of the incline to receive the ore. From the mine the ore is taken to the "washers" where it is thoroughly washed and the flint picked out; it is then ready for the market.

All along the railroads near the mines are small loading stations where the ore is loaded onto the cars ready to be shipped to the furnaces. At many of the furnaces a high trestle work runs the cars right over the receiving tank, but in most cases the ore is raised to the tank by elevators, which are run similar to the cars on the incline.

It is here in the large tank like structure that the ore, mixed with crushed coke is melted and made into pure iron, the cinder and refuse being skimmed off the surface while the iron is melting.

The foreign substances which iron contains modify its essential properties. Carbon adds to its hardness, but destroys some of its qualities, and produces cast iron or steel according to the proportion it contains. Sulphur renders it fusible, difficult to weld, and brittle when heated or "hot short." Phosphorus renders it "cold short," but may be present in the proportion of 2-1,000 to 3-1,000 without affecting injuriously its tenacity. Antimony, arsenic and copper have the same effect as sulphur, the last in a greater degree.

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