

At Seventeen or Seventy

By Jeanne O. Loizeaux

Bent and trembling, Grandma Simpson held her coarse, gray shawl more closely from the rough March wind, and trudged along in the slush, searching every inch of the way for the little folded paper she had dropped. It was late twilight and her eyes were dim. Besides, she was afraid to go home—Liz, her daughter-in-law, was none too gentle.

"I thought I was holdin' it tight," she said aloud, childishly, "but when I got to the store, it was gone. What'll I do?"

A step behind her made her step aside—whatever it was would want to pass. But old man Best did not pass. He stopped to peer kindly into the wrinkled face—this was the widow of his dead comrade.

"Did you lose something, Mary? Ain't it pretty raw for you to be out with your rheumatiz?" He stopped and leaned on his cane, a bluff, brisk, kindly man a few years her senior. He lived a few houses farther along on the humble street; he owned his neat, sailor-like home, and was accounted rich because of his small pension, and because he paid no rent—that burden of the poor.

He had seen little of Mary Simpson since she went to live with her son, John. Liz—John's wife—was slatternly and the children noisy, which the old man could not endure. He seldom went there; but now he saw trouble, a thing that called for help.

"Did you, p'raps, find a paper?" Grandma Simpson asked, tremblingly. "Liz sent me to the store with John's pay-check for the week—she was afraid to trust the children, and somehow—I lost it. I daren't go home without it, William. I thought I was a-holdin' it tight, but it's gone."

"Well, ain't that too bad? And in this March wind, it must have blown off. It's too wet to hunt for it—and too dark! I'll tell you what you do—you go home; and I'll turn out and hunt for it at first light for you. You tell 'em I will and it'll be all right."

She shook her head, and he saw on her cheek the bitter, scanty tears of the old. He knew what ge and loneliness were, and tried to comfort her.

"You'll get your death o' cold out here, and p'rhaps it'll be found and returned in the mornin'—folks honest about here."

"It won't be found," she answered gloomily, "an' I'd rather die'n hear what Liz'll say! John ain't home—an' she's tired an' cross. She's got too much to do an' I'm a burden even without losin' money for 'em. An' it does seem, though I hate complainin', as if I never could stand her slack housekeepin' an' the children's noise. An' there ain't a corner I can call my own anywhere. Couldn't you go back with me an' tell them it might have happened to anyone?"

The old man turned immediately. "Of course I'll go! No—wait. You come on to my house and I'll stir up the fire and you can stay there and make some tea for yourself, and I'll go along and tell them. Would that be easier? I know how it is to be blamed for losin' things! I'll tell them I found you huntin' for it and you had one o' them spells with your head and I took you to my house. And when John gets home from town, he can come after you."

Grandma Simpson, brightening at thought of temporary freedom, followed him without a word. He led her into the trim, three-roomed house with the garden behind, where he had flowers in summer. He lit a bright, kerosene lamp, stirred up the fire in the kitchen stove and put on the kettle. "You get you some tea while I'm gone. What did Liz want from the store? You can tell me and I'll get it and take it to her. Say—why not? Yes; let me make it good! It's fifteen dollars, ain't it? I can's well as not!" He stopped, a new thought in his head. His heart was sore. All year, he had been saving to visit his daughter in Denver; and just today she had written him that her husband's people had come and could he wait till next summer for his visit? The letter was kind, but it hurt. He would use some of the money to help Mary out.

"They needn't to know about the check at all, unless it's found—David would have done as much for me," he said of his dead husband. "We was always friends. What did Liz want?"

Unbelieving joy lit the old woman's face. Tidy and trim as a girl in her clean gray calico, she took off her shawl and warmed her hands at the fire.

"You're a good man, William! She wanted some sugar and potatoes, and bacon—and two loaves of bread. I can bake lovely bread, but she won't let me!—my children never ate baker's trade! I'll get your supper while you're gone."

The old man departed, and grandma, reveling in the clean and quiet of the little place, began with her old quickness, to get the simple meal. She put potatoes to bake in the oven, found some baked beans to warm up, and a bit of bacon to fry at the last minute, and made ready to brew the tea. She spread the red and white cloth and set the table daintily—Liz just slapped things on, anyway.

But she put on only one plate and cup—if he should ask her to stay, she could aoo another. The neighbors might talk if she remained, but her soul longed for a long, leisurely meal, and a talk with some one her own

age, without the interruption of the children, or the half-contemptuous listening of Liz. William Best had gone to school with her and David.

When she had done all that she saw to do, she smoothed her poor plume with the alacrity of a bird, and sat down to wait, with her feet on the hearth. She would not drink tea till he came. She would not have to say? Would the check be found? She tried not to worry.

When she had waited what she thought was an age, and had at last put the meat on to cook, she heard his step on the walk. He looked about a moment, then walked to the cupboard for another plate, cup, knife, fork and spoon. He put them on the table.

"You'll have to stay to supper," he said from the sink, where he was washing his hands. "I left word for John to come fetch you. I guess I bungled the job some. I took the things and the money, and told my little stories, but Liz was considerably riled. Seems she sent Miry to the store to see what come of you, and you must a' dropped the check in there, for they found it on the floor. Liz said I was interferin' and jawed some, but I stuck to it that you had a spell and I guess she believes that much."

Grandma was dishing up the "appetizing" meal and Liz' wrath was not so close that it worried her at the moment. At least an hour or so of peace was hers, and she would enjoy it to the fullest. She made the tea and the two sat down to eat.

She—guess perhaps you better stay here—for always, I mean, Mary. There's enough for two, and I like a tidy woman like you about. There's too many in that house—I don't see how you've stood it so long—and too few in this. You come over here just to even things up!"

"John—wouldn't like it—how could I?" she stammered, with the perverseness of woman, at seventeen or seventy, refusing to understand.

"If you married me, John couldn't say nothin', could he? He's a good-enough son, but he's at work, and you really have to live with his wife—besides, you know I always liked you, Mary, from a mite of a girl up, and even as David's wife—an' all. He wouldn't mind my lookin' after you, and it can't be done any other way as I can see. Can it?"

Mary Simpson shook her head; then she began to cry softly into her apron. He rose and patted her shoulder.

"You needn't say nothin' to any of them, Mary! You go home with John and Monday mornin' I'll get a license and Preacher Cottrell and you can slip over here about noon and we'll be married and no one can help it. What do you say?"

The old lady dropped her apron and looked up at him.

"I believe I'd like it real well, William. My little pension would help out some and I've always wanted a little garden and never had one since David died. It seems too good to be true."

William Best went back to his place at the table, content, and she poured him another cup of tea. Then, suddenly, she put her apron to her eyes again.

"What in tunket alls you, woman?" he asked, anxiously.

"I—ain't fit," she sniffed.

"You—you're good's gold—I've known you all your born life, woman!" He waited for her to explain.

"I mean—that I ain't got a thing fit to be married in!"

Even old man Best could not refrain a laugh at that.

"You're all alike—you women! You beat old White's cattle! I bet Eve cried for a white silk dress to be married in. Finish your supper, woman, and I'll get my mother's black silk out o' that chest in the corner there. It's good as new and you can take a tuck—or something in it. Father brought it home from sea, and it was the finest dress in the village in its time. She never wore it to speak of. It was too good. How's that?"

Then John knocked and entered, kindly, but rough, and took his mother home. And Grandma Simpson didn't care in the least what her daughter-in-law might say—she could endure anything till Monday.

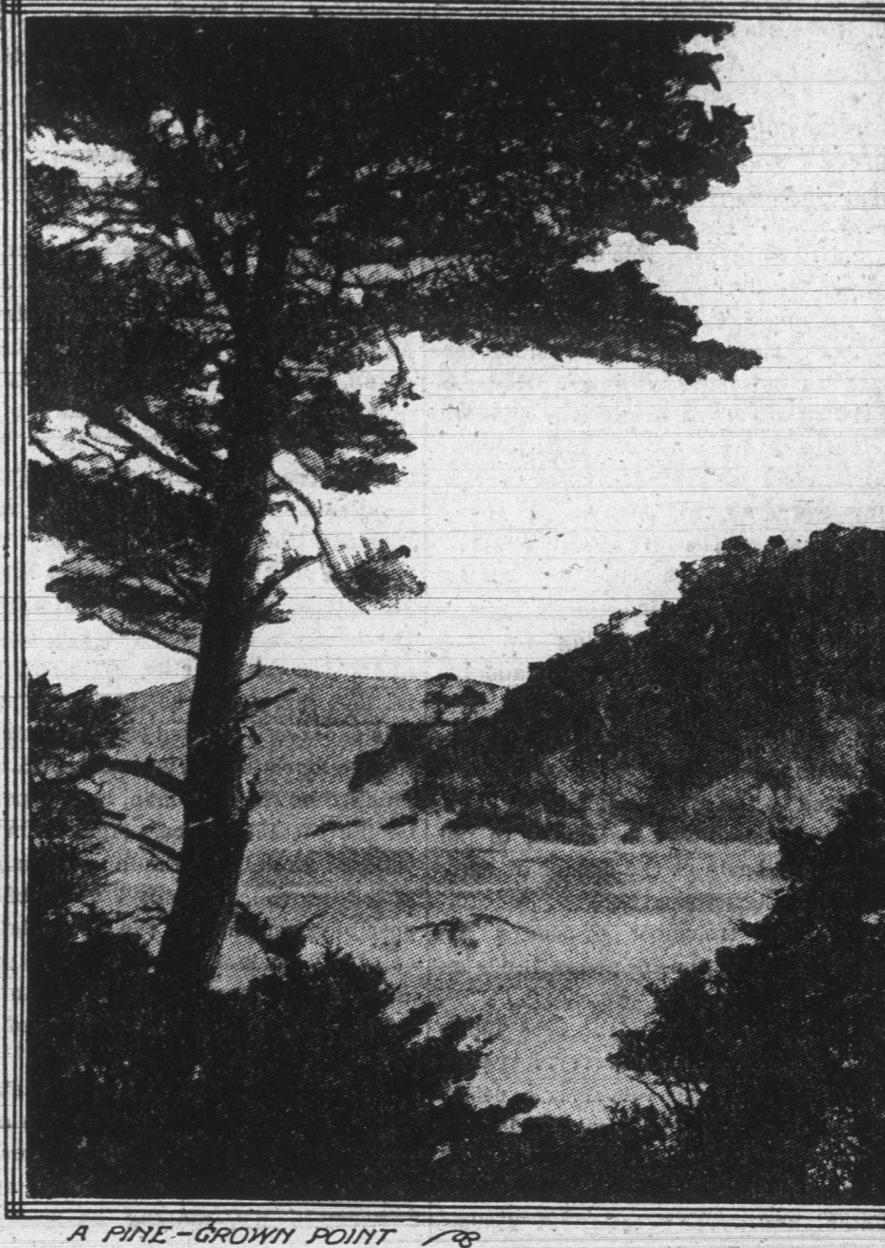
Congregation on Strike.

The unusual scene of a congregation on strike was witnessed at a Dumbarton (Scotland) parish church recently. Owing to the minister's financial difficulties and his refusal to resign, the congregation unanimously agreed to abstain from attending services during the present ministry. At this service the other Sunday forenoon there was a total congregation of only 12, including the organist, beadle, and minister's family. At the evening service only half a dozen persons entered the church.

Disgusted Hen Quits Task.

Mauch Chunk, Pa.—A desertion in the poultry yard of Victor P. Miller, the Bowmanstown landlord, has spoiled his chances of obtaining more than two goslings from five eggs put under a hen. A gander preempted the first gosling hatched, and when the hen went to coax her youngster back a Wyandotte rooster captured her nest, and hatched out a second gosling. The hen then abandoned the nest.

The TORREY PINES



A PINE-GROWING POINT

SAYS THE FELLOW ON TOP

Wage Earner Must Cut Out Luxuries Before He Has Right to Ask for Sympathy.

"How do you account for the high cost of living?"

The rubicund gentleman addressed, glanced at a check for \$8.85, representing the cost of his modest meal, handed the waiter \$10, with instructions to keep the change; pulled out a cigar that the interviewer recognized as a 50-cent, and leaned back in his chair.

"All rubbish," he said. "People live beyond their means and then growl about it. It's their own fault."

"I see. You believe that everybody should save part of his income?"

"Exactly."

"Umph-umph. Sounds reasonable. But what proportion of it do you think he should save? Suppose, for instance, the man earns \$1.10 a day, and has a wife and five children, and some of the babies get sick occasionally, and the older ones need clothes in which to go to school, and the landlord wants his rent right on the nail, and a pair of kid's shoes lasts a month, and the instalment on the sewing machine is 50 cents every two weeks, and he carries enough insurance to bury him, and enough medicine for his wife is half a dollar a throw, and everything that the members of his household eat and drink and wear costs more than it used to, and gets higher all the time, do you think he ought to save a very large proportion of his income?"

"You do not state the case fairly. Doubtless the man has vices. I am certain he smokes."

"I forgot that. Yes, he pays five cents a package for tobacco and a package lasts ten days."

"Ha! Shiftless fellow. And, of course, he has the nerve to complain. He'll cut out luxuries before he gets any sympathy from me."

Immigrants Sold at Dock.

It is pointed out by the London Chronicle that although the modern immigrant to American ports may be "sold" in a way, he is never sold in the same sense as were those immigrants of the eighteenth century whose fate one gathers from an advertisement in a New York paper of 1774. The advertisement runs: "Servants just arrived from Scotland, to be sold on board the Commerce, Capt. Ferguson, master, lying at the ferry stairs, among which are a number of weavers, tailors, blacksmiths, nailers, shoemakers, butchers, hatters and spinners, 14 to 35 years of age. For terms apply to Henry White or said master on board."

Safeguard to Health.

One of the most needful and most important safeguards to health is the recent invention of the germ-proof telephone mouthpiece. This device, made of clear crystal glass, is intended to replace the filthy rubber mouthpiece in common use, which furnish all sorts of germs an ideal breeding place. It has received the enthusiastic endorsement of doctors, bacteriologists and boards of health wherever introduced and is approved by all operating telephone companies.

The glass part can be instantly removed for cleaning and can be replaced as instantly. It can be wiped clean without removal. It is less liable to breakage than the ordinary rubber mouthpiece and admits light to all the parts of the device, thus securing an extra good sanitary condition.—Illustrated Sunday Magazine.

Women in Farm Work.

Almost 1,000,000 women in the United States are either farmers or farm laborers. Thanks to the popularity of the homestead in the west and to a belated appreciation of agriculture as a field for woman's industry, this number is rapidly increasing. The United States, however, has not gone so far in this respect as England. There, in the dairy sections, women have entire control of the herds, not only the butter making, but the milking and feeding. In France nearly 3,000,000 women are engaged in farm work, while in most of the countries of continental Europe the finer breeds of cattle are mainly the result of woman's efforts.—New Idea Woman's Magazine.

Cataclysmic Geology.

"Cataclysmic" geology no longer exists. It was once the accepted opinion that the great changes on the earth's surface had been mainly brought about by sudden and violent (cataclysmic) agencies; but Sir Charles Lyell, as far back as 1833, demolished the old theory of cataclysm at once and forever. Sir Charles proved by facts which were indisputable that the great geological changes have been produced slowly by gradual processes of subsidence and elevation, and not by earthquakes, volcanic action, etc. Lyell may be said to be the father of modern geology, or, to put it more correctly, of real scientific geology.

A Startier.

A gentleman whose hearing is defective is the owner of a dog that is the terror of the neighborhood in which he lives. The other day he was accosted by a friend, who said:

"Good morning, Mr. H. Your wife made a very pleasant call on us last evening."

"I'm very sorry," came the startling reply. "I'll see that it don't occur again, for I'm going to chain her up in future."—London Telegraph.

DEATH FOR "WITCH"

INTERESTING RELIC OF THE DAYS OF IGNORANCE.

Historical Archives of Salem, Mass., reveal depths of superstition and folly in which our forefathers were sunk.

Investigators making search through the archives of the Peabody Institute at Salem, Mass., have just unearthed a seventeen century warrant condemning to death Bridget Bishop, wife of a Salem attorney, on a charge of witchcraft.

Contrary to the traditions that witches were burned in Massachusetts, in the warrant condemning Mrs. Bishop to death William Stoughton, who with his associates in the warrant are styled judges of a special court of Oyer and Terminer for the counties of Essex, Middlesex and Suffolk, orders that George Corwin, the sheriff, shall hang her by the neck until she is dead.

Appended to the warrant is the return certificate made by Corwin showing that he had carried out the orders of the court.

The warrant and return are in seventeenth century English script, and transcribed reads as follows:

"To George Corwin Gent'n, High Sheriff of the County of Essex Greeting:

"Whereas Bridget Bishop al's Oliver, the wife of Edward Bishop of Salem in the County of Essex Lawyer at a special Court of Oyer and Terminer held at Salem the second Day of the instant month of June for the Counties of Essex Middlesex and Suffolk before William Stoughton, Esq; and his associates of the said court was indicted and arraigned upon five several Indictments for using practising and exercising on the . . . the felonies of Witchcraft in and upon the bodies of Abigail Williams, Ann Putnam . . . Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott and Elizabeth Hubbard of Salem village . . . single women; whereby their bodies were hurt, afflicted, pined consumed and tormented contrary to the forme of the statue in that case made and provided. To which Indictm'ts the said Bridget Bishop pleaded not guilty and for Tryall thereof put herself upon God and her Country whereupon she was found guilty of the Felonies and Witchcrafts whereof she stood indicted and sentenced of Death accordingly passed agt her as the Law directs. Execution whereof yet remains to be done. These are therefore in the names of their ma'ties William and Mary now King and Queen over England &c. to will and command you That upon Fryday next being the Tenth Day of this instant month of June between the hours of eight and twelve in the afternoon of the same day you safely conduct the s'd Bridget Bishop al's Oliver from their maj'ties Gaol in Salem afores'd to the place of execution and there cause her to be hanged by the neck until she be dead and of your doings herein make returne to the clerk of the s'd Court and of this pr'cept. And hereof you are not to fail at your peril. And this shall be your sufficient warrant given under my hand & seal at Boston the eighth day of June in the fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord William and Mary now King and Queen over England, &c. Anno'de Dom. 1692.

"WM. STOUGHTON.

"June 10th, 1692.

"According to the within written precept I have taken the body of the within named Bridget Bishop out of their majesties gaol in Salem and safely conveyed her to the place provided for her execution and caused yd Bridget to be hanged by the neck until she was dead all which was according to the time within required and so I make returne by me.

"GEORGE CORWIN, Sheriff."

The First Requisite.

When Senator Vance was running for congress he called on an old negro who had in early life served the Vance family. Asked after his health, the negro replied: "Mighty pol' in this worl', but it's all right over yander." "Do you believe in the doctrine of election?" asked Vance with great solemnity. "It's the doctrine of the Bible," answered the old man. "Uncle Ephraim, do you think I've been elected?" asked Vance again. "Massa Zeb, I'd a little ruther you wouldn't draw that question. I'm too near de grave to tell a lie, but the fac' am, I never yet knowed nor hear tell of no man bein' elected what wan't a candidate."

The Parable of the Ten Ideas.

A teacher put ten facts into a boy's mind, and when he returned a few months later, to see if the facts were still there, he was pleased to find that the boy remembered them. He paid the boy a high compliment on the possession of a mind that could hold knowledge so securely and deliver it up on demand with such prompt and beautiful exactness! Another teacher gave another boy ten facts, and some time after he also tested the boy to see what had happened. He found that from the ten he had given the boy there had grown a large number of other facts. He made no further inquiry, for he was not interested to know whether the facts he had given him were still there or not. He saw that the purpose for which they had been put in the boy's mind was working out all right, and there his interest ended.