

## WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

She was never married, our dear old aunt,  
Our mother's old Aunt Bess:  
We girls could never imagine why,  
Though we often tried to guess.

Her sweet old face, her wistful smile,  
And her eyes that seemed to say:  
"I too had a lover once, my dear,  
In a long past yesterday."

We were a party of merry girls  
Who never had known a care,  
Our heads full of lovers and love affairs,  
And our hearts as light as air.

One evening, our youngest, our winsome Kate  
(Her own wedding day was near),  
Said: "Why had you never a wedding day?  
Ah! do tell us, auntie dear."

But the sweet blue eyes grew sadly dim  
With tears that did not fall,  
And a faint flush tinged her cheek as she  
Said:  
"My dear, he ceased to call."

A sudden hush fell over us then—  
Our heart-beats were like a drum,  
As she slowly rose and left the room  
With never another word.

Ah! me! since that April afternoon  
I have seen both shadow and shine,  
Katie married—and Winnie dead—  
And a lonely heart is mine.

And oft in the quiet evening hour,  
When the silent shadows fall,  
I think of my dear old Aunt Bess,  
And her lover—who ceased to call.

—Maud Houston, in Chamber's Journal.



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## CHAPTER XI.—CONTINUED.

He put down the burden, and not waiting for the silver piece that I wished to give him he made a quick movement in the direction of the fields. The overseer abruptly withdrew.

The man who was seated had his back to me, but by the looks of the overseer he must have known that there was somebody beside the truant negro behind him. He rose and turned round. It was a thin, bent figure, in a flowered dressing-gown and slippers. His hair presented that singular appearance caused by turning white in patches and streaks. His face was hollow and wrinkled; his eyes were lusterless.

With the most apathetic expression he looked at me, and seemed to think that my appearance did not call for question or remark. At least he made none.

"I beg your pardon, sir," I said. "Is Mr. Pierce Bostock at home? Can I see him?"

"The overseer attends to all business," he said, peevishly. "Go to him; there he goes."

"I have no business that he can attend to. I must see Mr. Bostock personally."

"Must you, indeed?" He began to rouse a little at the word, and show irritation. "Where do you come from, anyway, young man, that you think a La Fourche planter can be made to attend in person at the beck and call of every interloper who fancies he has business with him? What?"

His own talk, delivered in a feeble, broken voice, excited him and brought on a fit of coughing. He stamped with vexation, and sat down on a bamboo settee through sheer weakness.

"I am Pierce Bostock," he said, when he could find voice again. "What the devil do you want?"

I ought to have expected this announcement, and to have been prepared for it; but I felt very much at that instant as though I had been following a chimera. To be exact, I felt cold and sick, and the hopes of long years vanished as a puff of smoke. And yet it seemed incredible. This Mr. Bostock—this hearty, ruddy, happy planter who had crossed our stony New Hampshire fields ten years before, and pushed out my horizon everywhere—this feeble, testy, drooping invalid?

My hopes were all turned to ashes on the spot; yet I resolved to speak out, and end the farce. He would not recognize me, or would bid me begone if he should. No matter—I would see which he would do, and then tear this cruel leaf out of the book of my life, and turn to other scenes.

"Well—are you dumb? What do you say for yourself?"

"Mr. Bostock, I am Dorris Jewett. Do you not know me?"

A very faint appearance of interest came to his face.

"Jewett?" he repeated. "I believe I used to hear that name. Why, yes; Amos Jewett was my schoolfellow when I was a boy. Dorris—Dorris? That was my father's name."

I saw that his mind was groping for memory, and I waited.

He motioned me to sit down with him. He looked at me, but was silent. "Amos Jewett was my father," I ventured. "Don't you remember coming to our poor New Hampshire home ten years ago, sir? Don't you remember how kind you were to us? I was the boy you took so much notice of."

He heard me, and the mists seemed dispelled from his brain as by magic. A look of surprised intelligence came to his face.

"You Dorris Jewett?—little Dorris? Bless me, how you have grown! I'm not often glad to see anyone but my child, in these days; but I am glad to see you. Is your father well?"

"Why, he died, sir, more than a year ago. I wrote to you about it."

"I never read letters now—nor papers—nor books. Not now. Yet I do remember a nice letter you wrote me once, years ago, before."

The change that came over that woe-filled face terrified me. It was literally black with rage, with fury, called up by his own speech.

"Yes, sir," I hastened to say, "and you answered it so kindly."

"Did? That is well; I am glad to hear it. So you've come to look up a wretched and lonely old man like me, have you, because I was kind to you? Do you know, my boy, I don't think there's another man in Louisiana, or

out of it, could soften me the way you have. I'm going to have you stay here, now you've come. Oh, yes, I do remember now all about the time I went to Boston, and back among the hills where I was born, and how I found you and poor Amos out in the fields, and at your good mother's mush and milk."

His face seemed recreated. It actually wore a gentle smile.

"But it was long ago, and life has been hard and cruel with me since, and I had forgotten all these pleasant things. Why, boy, it seems to me as if you'd come to me from another world."

He took my hand in his own thin hand.

"You'll stay with me, Dorris Jewett, won't you?"

I believe the tears came to my eyes at the question. It was asked in a voice which was the ghost of that hearty, resonant tone that had long sounded in my dreams. I told him that I would stay awhile.

"Always, Dorris; I want you with me. I remember, now, I asked you long ago to come. I am rich, my boy; I've got money, and plantations, and slaves; but I haven't any friends. Well, who would I be kind to, if it wasn't to Amos Jewett and his boy? O! Amos was my chum; he'd fight any boy that tried to put upon me. I want somebody to talk to; my girl can't always be with me. Le Fevre is a good fellow, but he's never happy unless he's driving the niggers round. He shall show you the plantation when you've rested—to-morrow—yes, that will be time enough. When you want to go to New Orleans he shall go with you; I never stir off the place. You'll see how the cane grows—the old cane and the new cane. Le Fevre says he's got more than a hundred acres now planted. He'll show you the sugar mill, and maybe he can figure up what the crop will be this year. Good black soil this, Dorris. This is better than planting corn in the cracks of the rocks up north, eh? No, you won't talk about going away, Dorris Jewett."

So he rambled on, a wreck of mind as well as body, continually striving to struggle out of the gloom in which he was involved, and to reach backward to familiar faces and scenes.

A burst of melody shook the air; a clear, pure voice, singing a merry French song. Mr. Bostock raised his head, and a new intelligence gave momentary luster to his eyes.

"Ah, that's Coralie!" he said. "You shall see Coralie. Here she comes."

## CHAPTER XII.

Down the walk she came from the house, light of step and graceful as a fawn, clothed in pure white, with roses in her raven hair. She was coming directly to her father, when she saw me. She looked from me to him; his smile at once seemed to arrest her attention.

"Why, papa, what has happened?" she exclaimed. "You are almost laughing! When did that happen before?"

"This is Dorris Jewett," he said, "the son of my old friend and schoolmate in the north. Dorris, this is my daughter, Coralie. He will be with us some time, child. Everything must be made agreeable to him."

"Indeed, since he has made you



"THIS IS DORRIS JEWETT," HE SAID.

smile, papa. I hope he will stay long. You are very welcome, Mr. Jewett."

With bewitching grace she extended her hand. I took it, and new hopes came to me. The world seemed brightening.

We walked up to the house together. We sat in the cool rooms with their antique furniture. Mr. Bostock had become passive and silent, from the fatigue, I thought, of unusual emotions. But I was rejoiced to see that he looked often at me, and that my presence seemed to have a good effect on him.

I found Coralie charming, frank, unaffected. She wished to be told about the far northern states, their people and their ways. All that I had to tell interested her. Then she sang and played for me exquisitely. It was the music of nature. The mocking-bird's song that I heard that night in the magnolias was not sweeter.

At dinner Mr. Le Fevre, the overseer, came in, and we were made acquainted. He seemed a blunt man, but not rude, and his reserve soon gave way to conversation. I saw from the looks of the house-servants that he was no more a favorite indoors than out.

The quadroon girl who stood behind Mr. Bostock's chair and pulled the cord that moved above the table a fan, keeping a current of air circulating in the room—this girl I once observed "making a face" at the overseer, when he was looking elsewhere.

"I hope you did not whip Jerry," said Mr. Bostock.

"No, sir, since you desired me not to. But a thrashing would do the boy lots of good."

"You are such a cruel man," the lady remarked.

"Ah, Miss Coral, you'll never understand how lazy these niggers are, when they're not followed close. If it wasn't for me, your father wouldn't have half a crop, any year. That Jeremiah, for instance: he'd fish in the bayou and play the banjo all day, if I didn't look after him."

"We do have better crops under Mr. Le Fevre's management," said Mr. Bostock. "Still, I don't see why he has to drive up the field hands s. They get along better on other plantations."

"I'll show you the difference when the cane is cut," said the overseer, with his mouth full.

"I think Mr. Le Fevre would get on easier with our people if he had always been at the south," said the lady.

"May be so, Miss Coral. I'm a Pennsylvanian, and I came down here fresh, to learn about the niggers. I know 'em! They want bossing, and a good deal of it."

Weeks passed swiftly by, and I remained at this delightful home. Remembering my promise, I wrote to Mr. Dorion, giving him a full account of affairs here, and of the condition of his old friend. I will say here, that the subject need not be again referred to, that, while my presence and the recollections it recalled had a temporary effect in withdrawing Mr. Bostock from the clouds that enveloped him, that unfortunate condition soon returned. He was sunk in melancholy, morose and peevish. There was never a time when the sight of his child or the sound of her voice would not cause him to shake off his shadows and converse freely with me. But the effort was vain. The decline of his physical health was bad enough; but it was not to be compared to the changed condition of his mind. I watched him narrowly, and I began to think that Mr. Dorion was right. The man's mental faculties were impaired; but there was some mysterious terror, some haunting dread back of that condition. He would sit for an hour sunk in moody abstraction, and when suddenly addressed would start, look wildly at his daughter, and recover his sense of his surroundings slowly and with effort. Could all this be the result of remorse, the punishment of conscience for the slaying of Castex? No; for I recalled Mr. Dorion's shuddering description of the ferocity with which his friend had avowed that he meant to kill his adversary. My watchings, and my reflections by day and night, gave me no clew to the mystery of the man's demeanor, to the appalling change that had come over him.

So the weeks passed. One week had not gone when I was placed upon a footing of charming, cordial friendship with the beautiful daughter of this house. We read together, she often aloud from old French romances, in the original. She played and sang to me; she told me all about this strange region, with its natural wonders. I told her of the White Mountains and the granite hills, the snow-storms and the cold of winter. All these things she had read of, but she listened to my stories as though they were leaves from some fairy chronicle. And, most charming of all, we would wander by the moonlight through the oak and magnolia grove; through the wide fields green with the cane leaves, to the edge of the impenetrable cypress swamps, where the cry of the pelican and the splash of the alligator could be heard.

Did I reflect as to whether all this was tending? Did it occur to me that the seed I was sowing could only come to a bitter harvest of impossibilities? In fact, I took no thought about it. I let the dream go on—the entrancing, enrapturing dream!

But my time was not all passed in this way. I became well acquainted with Le Fevre, and found that he was much more blunt than brutal; though the negroes all stood in fear of him. He took me over the plantation and explained the processes of cane-growing, cutting and grinding. We went over to New Orleans, put up for three days at the St. Charles, and examined the wonders of the crescent river-front with its forest of smoke-pipes and the busy scenes of the levee. We strolled in the French quarter of this unique city, which, within less than a century, has been under Spanish, French and American government; we visited the market; we rode in the suburbs on the hard and shining shell roads. Back again at the La Fourche plantation, we went over to the ancient French town of Thibodeaux, and dined at an inn, where, except the bread, I knew not the name of a single dish that I ate.

It was to me a season of glamour, a happy time, that I knew must end, somehow; yet I was treated precisely as though I were to remain forever. I wished not to break the spell; and it was only to test Mr. Bostock's feelings toward me that I said to him one day, when we were alone:

"I have been with you six weeks; is that not a pretty long visit?"

He roused himself and looked troubled.

"You don't think of leaving me, Dorris?"

"Why, sir—you know I've got my own way to make, somehow. This is all pleasure and vacation."

"You like it here, then?"

"Indeed I do, sir. Everything is charming."

"Stay, then. It does me good to have you here. Stay till November, anyway. I can't have you go so soon. Do you want money?"

"No, sir."

"Tell me whenever you do. Enjoy yourself all you can—and don't think of going. I loved your father; I love you."

His hand was laid affectionately on my shoulder; a mist shone in his weary eyes.

So that was settled—for a time. I was not to leave him—nor Coralie. But that night in my dreams the warning face of Mr. Dorion came to me, and I seemed to hear his words again:

"There is a fearful mystery hanging over his past life. I do not know, you do not know, how you may become complicated with it, if you persist in going on."

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW PRODIGAL.

It was an evening of early September that the first shadow fell upon my

pleasant existence at this home. Mr. Bostock's habit was to retire early. This night he had chosen to remain up, and was sitting in his easy chair upon the veranda. Coralie was at the piano; I sat on the upper step, listening to the laughter and banjo-strumming from the negro quarters. Le Fevre sat lower down, smoking, engaged in his own thoughts. There was no moon that night, and the tall figure that came up from the road was upon us before we saw it.

"Does Pierce Bostock live here?" The voice seemed familiar to me, though I did not at first remember where I had heard it.

"Yes," said the overseer, gruffly.

"What do you want?"

"I want to see him."

"Well, perhaps you can't. I attend to his business mostly. He don't see strangers."

"I am not a stranger. I reckon he'll see me when he knows I am here."

Mr. Bostock suddenly roused himself. "Who is that?" he asked.

"Yes, I think he'll see me," the stranger loudly repeated.

I heard a sigh from the invalid, a deep-drawn, troubled sigh.

"Tell him to go away," he faintly said. "What makes him come here to annoy me? I don't want to see him!"

"You hear, do you?" Le Fevre said.



standing in front of the stranger.

"What d'ye mean, coming here to trouble a sick man? You go, or I'll find a way to help you."

"O, very well. If Mr. Bostock won't see me, he'll hear of me. May be he'd like to have me take a turn around La Fourche and talk with the planters about old times. Good evening."

He turned on his heel.

"Stop!" said Mr. Bostock. "Tell him to come in."

He rose and walked into the parlor. The stranger followed. Perhaps a due regard for social propriety should have restrained me from following; but the impulse to do so, growing out of my recognition of the voice and my powerful interest in Mr. Bostock, was irresistible. As for the pugnacious overseer, the sharp words that he had had with the stranger and the constraint under which the planter was acting were sufficient reasons to cause him to go in also.

## [TO BE CONTINUED.]

## MEDICAL LORE OF THE ORIENT.

Documents of the Seventh Century Recently Found by a Missionary.

We have on more than one occasion suggested that a vast field of medico-historical research exists in oriental, more especially in Chinese, territory, and we have now to record an important "find" in confirmation of our surmise, says the London Lancet. This time it is the region beyond our Cashmere frontier—the hill country between Chinese Leh and Yarkand—that had been laid under contribution, and the treasure-trove in question is due to the sagacious inquiries of a Moravian medical missionary, Mr. Weber, whose station is at Leh.

He received it from an Afghan condottier—a pastmaster in such investigation—and it consists of a series of manuscripts dating from the seventh century A. D., and deals with medicine and its traditionally allied subjects of astronomy and witchcraft. The documents were handed by Mr. Weber to Dr. Hørnle, of the Bengal Asiatic society, whose well-known skill in oriental paleography at once recognized their tenor, as also the material on which they were written.

This latter is identical with the paper still used by the Himalayan tribes, being composed of the same vegetable fibers and not of the birch bark employed for the writings brought to England by Capt. Bowen. Dr. Hørnle ascribes the good preservation of the manuscripts first to the dryness of the surrounding air and next to their having been "sized" with white arsenic. He gives a translation of one of the spells for inducing fever, presumably as a punishment or in revenge—a spell eminently characteristic of its Chinese origin, and interesting not only to the medical historian, but also to the student of popular superstitions.

## Old-Fashioned Dutch.

In Holland the people of the towns have moved with the world and changed their fashion of dressing as the years went on. But in North Holland, and away from the highways of travel, the people still wear the costumes their ancestors did when they settled New York. Perhaps the foreign air comes principally from the sabots and caps. The sabots are universal—men, women and children wearing these queer wooden shoes. Caps are unending in their diversity. It has been said that the women of every town in that country have their own peculiar style of cap. Down in Schevringen the close muslin cap, the bright plaid shawl worn as a bertha, the very white, white apros and the clean priat dress are really not so unlike what a tidy workwoman wears anywhere else in the world. In the winter the neat Dutchwoman wears a picturesque black stock lined with a bright red.

We all enjoy praise which we do not hear, and resent contempt which we do not see.

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