TRUANT MOLLY.

The winds have lulled the shadows to sleep,
The cows came home long ago,
The things of day strange silence keep—
Why does that child linger so?

Shading her eyes from the setting sun
The mother stands by the gate,
Watching long for the truant one;
Oh! where does she stay so late?

Has she wandered on where the swamp flowers blow,
Down by the gliding stream?
Hark! was that a faint "Hello?"
No, naught but the loon's weird scream.

Has she slipped on those dank, dark mosses
On the cliffs where the tall pines grow,
Food for the green, slimy waters
Of those treacherous bogs below?

Nay, hush ye, timorous mother;
Thy maiden is safe and sound;
No deep, dark waters smother,
Or the lithe, willowy form surround.

She is down at the foot of the meadow,
There at the end of the lane,
Asking a daisy the question
Whether her love loves back again.

And Jack is bending beside her,
Down there amid the rye—
Two curly heads near together—
To see that the daisy don't lie.

—Henry W. Hall in New England Magazine.

A LOVE STORY.

I sat spinning at my little wheel in the sun, for the autumn day was cold, when I heard some one whistling, and, looking up, there was young Squire Turner, with his arms folded on the gate, looking over. When he caught my eye he laughed, I blushed, and I arose and made him a courtesy.

He was a handsome gentleman, the squire, and the hand from which he pulled the glove shimmered in the sun with pearls and diamonds, and he was bonny to loook at with his hair like spun gold in the October sunlight.

When I courtesied he bowed, making his curls dance over his shoulders, and said he: "I've spoiled one pretty picture that I could have looked at all day, but I've made another as pretty, so I'll not grieve. May I come in?"

"And welcome, sir," said I, and I set a chair, for he was grandfather's landlord; but for all that I felt uncomfortable, for I was not used to fine company.

He talked away, paying me more compliments than I was used to, for grandmother, who brought me up, said, "Handsome is as handsome does," and "Beauty is but skin deep."

Since I'm telling the story I'll tell the truth. I had done wrong about one thing. Neither of the old folks knew that I wore Evan Locke's ring in my bosom, or that we'd taken a vow to each other beside the hawthorn that grew in the church lane. I never meant to deceive, but grannie was old and a little hard, and that love of mine was such a sweet secret. Besides, money seems to outweigh all else when people have struggled all their lives through to turn a penny, and they knew Evan was a poor, struggling young surgeon. I thought I'd wait a while until I could sweeten the news with the fact that he'd begun to make his fortune.

Grannie came in from the dairy five minutes after the squire was gone and heard he had been there. I didn't tell her of his fine speeches, but there was a keyhole to the door she came through and I have a guess she heard them.

That night we had something else to think of. Misfortunes had come upon grandfather; but I didn't foresee that when the half year's rent should come due not a penny to pay it with would be found.

All this time Evan Locke and I had been as fond as ever of each other, and he came as often as before to talk with grandpa on the winter nights; and still every little while our young landlord, Squire Turner, would drop in and sit in his lazy way and watch me knit or spin. Once or twice he was flushed with wine and over bold, for he tried to kiss me. But squire or no, I boxed his ears for his pains, and no softer than I could help either.

I could not help his coming, nor help seeing him when he came, and I did not deserve that Evan should be angry with me. But he was. Eh, so high and mighty, and spoke as though one like the squire could mean no good by coming to so poor a place as the schoolmaster's.

He made me angry and I spoke up.

"For that matter, the squire would be glad to have me promise to marry him," said I. "He thinks more of me than"——

"May be you like him better!" said Evan.

"I don't say that," replied I. "But bad temper and jealousy scarce ever make me over fond of another. I pray I may never have a husband who will scold me."

For he had been scolding me. No name for it.

Evan was wroth with me and I m—not heart deep, though. I and I did not see him for more eek. I was troubled much, knew he would come round again, and mayhap ask my pardon. For before you are wed you can bring your lover to his senses.

So I did not fret after Evan's absence, nor quite snub Squire Turner, who liked me more than ever. But one night grandfather came in, and shutting the door, stood between grandmamma and me, looking at me, and so strangely that we both grew frightened. At last he spoke:

"I've been to the squire's," said he. "For the first time I had to tell him that I could not pay the rent when due."

I opened my lips. Grandmamma's hand covered them. Grandpa drew me to him.

"Thou'rt young, lass," said he, "and they are right who call thee pretty. Child—could'st like the squire well enough to wed him?"

"Eh?" cried grandma. "Sure, you're not wandering?"

"Squire Turner asked me for this lass of ours to-night. Of all women in the world there is but one he loves as he should his wife, and that is our Agatha."

"I dreamt of golden rings and white roses on Christmas eve," cried grannie. "I knew the lass would be lucky."

But I put my head on grandfather's shoulder and hid my face. The truth must out, I knew.

"Wilt have him and be a rich lady?" said grandpa.

And when he had waited for an answer I burst out with "No" and a sob together.

"She's frightened," said grandmamma. "Nay, we must all wed once in our lives, my child."

Then grandpa talked to me. He told me how poor they had grown, and how kind the squire was, and I had but to marry him to make my grandparents free from debt and poverty their lives through. If I refused and vexed the squire heaven only knew what might happen.

"She'll never ruin us," sobbed grandmamma.

Ah! it was heard to bear—bitter hard; but now there was no help for it. I took the ring from my bosom and laid it on my palm, and told them it was Evan Locke's and that I had plighted my troth to him. And grandmamma called me a deceitful wench, and grandfather looked as though his heart would break.

Oh, I would have done anything for them—anything but give up my true love.

That night I kissed his ring and prayed heaven that he might love me always. In the morning it was gone, ribbon and all, from my neck. I looked for it high and low, but found no sign of it. And I began to fear the loss of that dear ring was a sign that I would never marry Evan Locke.

The days passed on, and he never came near me.

"Oh, it was cruel in him," I thought, "to hold such anger for a hasty word he had provoked, when I spoke it that he must know I loved him so."

And grandma would scarcely look at me (I know why now), and grandpa sighed and moaned and talked of the work house. And I thought I should die of grief among them.

One day grandma said to me, "It seems that your sweetheart is not over fond of you, nor over anxious to see you."

"Why not?" said I.

"Where has he been this month back?" asked grandma.

"Busy, doubtless," said I, with a smile, though I thought my heart would burst.

"You're going with him, maybe."

"Where?" said I.

She went to the kitchen door and beckoned in a woman who sat there—Dame Coombs, who had come over with eggs.

"I heard you rightly," she said. "You told me Evan Locke and his mother were making ready for a voyage."

"They're going to Canada. My son, a carpenter—and a good one, though I say it—made the doctor a box for his things. The old lady dreads the new country, but she goes for the doctor's sake. There's money to be made there."

"I told you so," said grandmother.

"I don't believe it," said I.

"They've sold the house and gone to Liverpool to take ship; and you may find the truth for yourself, if you choose to take the trouble," said Dame Coombs. "I'm no chatterbox, to tell falsehoods about my neighbors."

And still I would not believe it until I had walked across the moor and had seen the shutters fast closed and the door barred, and not a sign of life about the place. Then I gave up hope. I went home all pale and trembling, and sat down at grandmamma's knee.

"It's true," said I.

"And for the sake of so false a lad you'll see your grandfather ruined and break his heart, and leave me, that have nursed you from a babe, a widow."

I looked at her as she sobbed, and I found strength to say:

"Give me to whom you will then, since my own love does not want me."

And then I crept up stairs and sat down on my bedside, weak as though I had fainted. I would have thanked heaven for forgetfulness just then, but it wouldn't come.

The next day Squire Turner was in the parlor as my accepted lover. How pleased he was, and how the color came back into grandfather's old face! And grannie grew so proud and kind, and all the house was aglow, and only I sad. But I couldn't forget Evan—Evan whom I had loved so—sailing away from me without a word.

I suppose they all saw I looked sad. The squire talked of my health, and would make me ride with him over the moors for strength.

The old folks said nothing. They knew what ailed me; only our little Scotch maid seemed to think there was aught wrong. Once she said to me:

"What ails ye, miss? Your eye is dull and your cheek is pale, and your braw grand lover canna make ye smile; ye are na that ill, either."

"No, I am well enough," said I.

She looked at me wistfully.

"Gin ye'd tell me your all, I might tell ye a cure," she said.

But there was no cure for me in this world, and I couldn't open my heart to simple Jennie. So the days rolled by, and I was close on my marriage eve, and grannie and Dorothy Plume were busy with my wedding robes. I wished it were my shroud they were working at instead.

And one night the pain in my heart grew too great, and I went out among the purple heather on the moor, and there knelt down under the stars and prayed to be taken from the world, "for how can I live without Evan?" I said.

I spoke the words aloud, and then started up in affright, for there at my side was an elfish little figure, and I heard a cry that at first I scarce thought earthly. Yet it was but Scotch Jennie, who had followed me.

"Why do ye call for your true love now?" she said; "ye sent him fra ye for sake o' the young squire."

"How dare you follow and watch me?"

But she caught my sleeve.

"Dinna be vexed," she said. "Just bide a wee, and answer what I speer. It's for love of you, for I've seen ye waste like the snaw wreath in the sun sin the squire woed ye. Was it your will the lad that loved the ground ye trod on should have his ring again?"

"What do you mean?" said I.

"I'll speak gin I lose my place," said Jennie. "I rode with the mistress to young Dr. Locke's place past the moor, and there she lighted and gave him a ring, and what she said I know not, but it turned him the tint o' death, and said he, 'There's na a drop o' true bluid in a woman 'gin she is false.' And he turned to the wall and covered his eyes, an' your grannie rode home. There 'tis all I ken—wull it do?"

"Ay, Jennie," said I, "heaven bless you!"

And had I wings on my feet I could not have come to the cottage door sooner.

I stood before my grandmother, trembling and white, and I said: "Oh, don't tell me, grannie, you have cheated me and robbed me of my true love by a lie. Did you steal the troth ring from my neck and give it back to Evan, as if from me? You I've loved and honored my life long"——

She turned scarlet.

"True love!" said she, "you've but one true love now—Squire Turner."

"You have done it!" I cried. "It's written on your face."

And she looked down at that and fell to weeping.

"My own true love was breaking his heart," she said. "My husband and I had loved for forty years. I did it to save him. Could I let a girl's fancy, worth nothing, stand in my way, and see him a beggar in his old age? Oh, girl, girl!"

And then I fell down at her feet like a stone. I knew nothing for an hour or more; but then, when I was better, and they left me with Jennie, I bade her fetch my hood and cloak and her own and come with me, and away I went across the moor in the starlight to where the hall windows were ablaze with light, and asked the housekeeper to let me see the squire.

She stared at me for my boldness—no wonder—but called him. So in a moment he stood before me in his evening dress, with his cheeks flushed and his eyes bright, and led me into a little room and seated me.

"Agatha, my love, I hope no mischance brings you here."

But I stopped him.

"Not your love, Squire Turner," I said. "I thank you for thinking so well of me, but after all that has passed I"——

I could say no more. He took my hand.

"Have I offended you, Agatha?" he said.

"Not you. The offense—the guilt—oh, I have been sorely cheated!" And all I could do was to sob.

At last strength came to me. I went back to the first and told him all—how we had been plighted to each other, waiting only for better prospects to be wed, and how, when he honored me by an offer of his hand, I angered my grandmother by owning to the truth, and of the ring grannie had stolen from my breast and the false message that had been sent my promised husband from me.

"And though I never see Evan Locke again," said I, "still I can never be another man's true love, for I am his until I die."

Then as I looked all the rich color faded out of the squire's face, and I saw the sight we seldom see more than once in a lifetime—a strong young man in tears.

At last he arose and came to me.

"My little Agatha never loved me," he said. "Ah, me! the news is bad—I thought she did. This comes of vanity."

"Many a higher and fairer have hearts to give," I said. "Mine was gone ere you saw me."

And then, kind and gentle, as though I had not grieved him, he gave me his arm and saw me across the moor, and at the gate paused and whispered:

"Be at rest, Agatha. The Golden George has not sailed yet."

I liked him better than I had ever done before that night when I told grannie that I would never wed him.

Eh! but he was fit to be a king—the grandest, kindest, best of living men, who rode away with the break of the morrow and never stopped till he reached Liverpool and found Evan Locke just ready to set foot upon the Golden George, and told him a tale that made his heart light and sent him back to me. Heaven bless him!

And who was it that sent old grandfather the deed of gift that made the cottage his own, and who spoke a kind word to the gentry for young Dr. Locke that helped him into practice? Still no one but Squire Turner, whom we taught our children to pray for every night. For we were married, and in a few years had boys and girls at our knees; and when the eldest was nigh two, the thing I needed to make me quite happy happened—and from far over the sea, where he had been three twelvemonths, came our squire with the bonniest lady that ever blushed beside him, and the hall had a mistress at last—a mistress who loved the squire as I loved Evan.

Eh! but it's an old story. She that I remembered a girl I saw in her coffin, withered and old. And then they opened the vault where the squire had slept ten years to put her beside him; and I've nothing left of Evan, my life and my love, but his memory, and it seems as if every hope and dream of joy I ever had was put away under tombstones. And even the Golden George, the great strong ship that would have borne my dear from me, has moldered away at the bottom of the sea. And I think my wedding ring is like to outlast us all, for I have it yet, and I shall be 90 to-morrow.

Ninety! It's a good old age, and it can't be long now before I meet Evan and the rest in heaven.—Gentleman's Magazine.

Sugar Cane Juice.

A horse treadmill grinding sugar cane and pressing out the juice for sale to passers by is an odd feature of the wayside in Tampa, Fla., and one or two other southern cities. The liquid sells for a nickel a glass, and many people like it. It tastes insipid and sickish sweet to a northern palate.—Exchange.

The Telephone Responsible.

Until the introduction of the telephone the retailer of toys and notions never knew what it was to incur bad debts. He did not have to placard his store with "please don't ask for credit" signs, for no one seemed to think of coming in to buy toys or trifles unless he had the wherewithal handy to pay for them. But now orders come by telephone which no one likes to ignore, nor can the c. o. d. system be rigidly enforced, however much one may try. So every year a larger sum has to be written off to profit and loss as "bad debts," for the amounts, although large in the aggregate, are too small to make their collection a commercial possibility.

Another bad result from the telephone, so far as this business is concerned, is the increased percentage of goods which have to be delivered. Toys bought over the counter are nearly always taken home, but telephone orders have to be sent, however trifling the profit may be. I know of two instances in which telephones have been abandoned in the hope of forcing a return to the old regime. But the wheels of progress cannot be clogged, and as long as there is an obliging druggist in the block to receive and forward orders, and a rival store close by with a telephone in it, the new order of things will continue.—Interview in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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