

THE STORY OF A SONG

By MRS. NEVILLE PEEL

A cool breeze blew through the dusky room of a Swiss hotel. Mrs. Payne shivered and rose to close the window; as she did so she saw snow covered mountains towering high against the starlit sky, the soft shimmer of moonlight filtering through the frost. It was a scene for fairyland. However the fairies were not there—only the tall, ill-made stature of the Scotman to whom she had engaged herself, stood looking in at her window. Mrs. Payne nodded and smiled because, under the circumstances, there was nothing else to be done; she closed the window, turned and sought the sorry comfort of a horsehair sofa in the corner of the room, and clasping her long white hands together, she said out loud:

"What a price to pay!" Her dog which was sitting on a rug close to her whined sympathetically.

"Never mind, Larry!" said his mistress, "there is great comfort in this for me; we shall not have to live by ourselves any more."

The dog jumped on her lap and nuzzled her pretty face; he was a fine Irish terrier with clever, shrewd brown eyes and seemed to understand the situation. When a shuffling step was heard in the passage he wagged his tail at exactly the right moment and made Sir James MacDonnell exceedingly welcome.

"I am afraid I am disturbing you," said the intruder in his civil level tones, "but I have to go away early to-morrow morning, and I should like to speak to you, as from what you say, I will not see much of you until we meet in St. George's, Hanover Square, in three weeks' time."

She nodded her head and smiled at him a little while she did, and as he stood tall and shy it did not encourage him to approach her any nearer. All in a moment she raised her heavy-lidded, dark-lashed eyes to his and bade him sit beside her on the sofa. He disposed of his lank body on the far end, and absently twisted his gold watch chain with his fingers while his small eyes blinked. Presently he felt in his coat pocket, and produced a flat paper packet, and burst into speech.

"I wanted to show you the photographs of my children," he said abruptly. "They came by this evening's post." Awkwardly he unfolded the parcel and showed her the pictured faces of his offspring, nestling together against a background of fleecy clouds.

"How pretty!" she said, surprisedly.

"Why did you not tell me how absolutely perfect they are?" There was life and animation in her voice; in her artistic sense of the beautiful it was an unexpected alleviation to turn from the father to the exquisite loveliness of her future stepchildren.

"The children are like their mother," he said, in his slow, quiet, hesitating tones. "I hope you will be kind to them; they have had a wretched time with me. Somehow we are—" and he paused. "We don't get on," he ended simply enough, looking down at his large boots.

"Nonsense!" she said in her soft voice, "how ridiculous to talk of not getting on with such babies as these! Their mother must have been perfectly charming," she added gently.

"She was," returned the Scotman, blinking his eyes and smiling bitterly. "Charming to every one, but never to her husband. You see, she never cared for me, she married me for my money, and—" he hesitated, a dull red color suffused his cheek; he looked up at the woman beside him. She had grown very white, but he did not observe it; he was thinking of himself and his own past. "My married life was very unhappy," he said. "I wanted you to know. I never thought of marrying again until I met you, and then—"

"You do love me a little, don't you, Eileen?" he said. "It isn't only my millions?" His tiny orbs sought her face once more, and he waited.

Mrs. Payne was an adept at telling lies; somehow she could not tell this one. For answer she raised the great bony paw to her lips; the act was easier than the direct falsehood. The man sighed contentedly, and drawing her closer, he kissed her soft cheek. Mrs. Payne thought what a bony, prickly kiss it was. She shuddered ever so slightly.

"Yes, do not tremble so, dearie," he said.

Mrs. Payne thought "dearie" was a dreadful word. She rose to her feet and walked to the other end of the room, picked up some music and sat down. He walked over to where she sat. He loved her and dreamed that the moment should come in which he must say "good-by," which would last for three weeks. His eyes wandered to the open piano.

"Won't you sing to me? Just one song before I go," he said; anxiously.

It is not given to the world yet—I have to correct and improve it, and when we are settled up in Scotland there will be plenty of time; it will be the first song that I shall sing with my married name."

She looked down at him from her great height and smiled softly; the vision of wealth and pleasure which she had conjured up for the moment was not displeasing, while the allusion to their life together was music to the Scotman's ears. He followed her like a great faithful dog to the piano, and as her rich contralto voice rose and fell in the delicious melody to which she had set



James McCrea.

"Won't you sing to me?" old words, he sang, common-place as he was, felt himself to be in fields of Elysium.

There is no song of all our hearts are singing
But has some note whose haunting sadness grieves,
There is no rose of all the year is bringing
But has some thorn unseen amid the leaves,
There is no garden but some weed incloses;
There is no day but has its hour of pain,

Yet still we sing, and gather earth's bright roses—
Walk in its garden and forget the rain,
Sing on, oh heart! although the tears may glisten,
Gather life's roses although the rain be rife,
Earth is not all—His angels ever listen;
Heaven shall make perfect our imperfect life.

She ceased singing and looked at her gaunt lover; he was gazing at her in a sort of shy, furtive rapture, and in the moonlight she could see the tears glistening in his narrow little eyes.

"Who believes in angels nowadays?" she said. "Who believes in heaven and a perfect life?"

"I have not had a dinner that one can call a dinner for years," said Mr. Arthur Blair, looking up pathetically at his brother-in-law and cousin, Sir James MacDonnell, as he sat at the flower-decked table of a small sitting-room of the Hotel Metropole, Pall Mall.

Now, Flora was Sir James's sister, and Arthur Blair's wife, an accomplished kill-joy of whom they were both afraid.

"Not in her line," said Sylvia Blair.

"No," returned the husband. "A funeral, now, she would have enjoyed that."

"You really are too bad, Arthur," said his sister.

"It is merely a matter of taste, you know," he replied, "but, dear Jim, it was an excellent idea of yours, dining us here instead of at your gloomy old quarters in Westminster. The worst of it is that, in my official capacity of best man, I should have dined you. By the bye, why did you ask me to be your best man, Jim?" questioned Mr. Blair; "me a pauper, and a married man?" and again the little man wrinkled his forehead inquiringly.

"Because he was too shy to ask any one else to officiate in that capacity," replied Sylvia. "Weren't you, Jim? It will really be most interesting to see you in the role of husband to a musical genius who has been sought after in the cities of Europe; you may be a little thought that she would see her days in a Scotch town."

self more than ever to her art," returned the fiance, proudly. "That is all very well," said Sylvia, "but you must open the castle gates sometimes; she will never hear the strain of being shut up in an interminable park, with the wind shrieking down the great avenue through long stormy days."

"Don't you think you could do without me at Drumlina?" said Sylvia gently, as the door closed on her brother.

"No, certainly not," said Sir James decidedly.

"There is the housekeeper, you know," returned Sylvia, soothingly. "The housekeeper," repeated Sir James. "This one seems a fairly responsible person, but she has only been with me six weeks, the one before entertained paying guests all the time I was away in Norway. One of her lodgers was taken ill at Drumlina and died; a friend of mine passing saw a funeral coming out at the North Lodge and wrote to condole with me on the death of one of my children. I shall never forget the shock it gave me."

Sylvia laughed. "You may laugh," he said, "but it was no laughing matter at the time. That is why I feel that in marrying Eileen I am doing the best for my children." He looked at Sylvia with a sort of wistful air, as if one who would have his statement confirmed.

"Oh, of course!" said Miss Blair evasively, but as she looked up at her host she saw him turn on his chair and listen intently while the pale pink color rose in his withered cheek.

"They are singing in the sitting room next to this," he said, rather excitedly. "The woman's voice is not unlike Eileen's, not quite so sweet, perhaps, but it resembles hers."

"Yes?" returned Sylvia interrogatively. "I have never heard her sing."

"She has not been singing lately," said Sir James. "She has been much too busy, she writes to me this morning from her little house in Motcombe Street that she was overwhelmed with all she had to do, in the giving up of her husband, etc., and in making preparations for our sojourn at Cairo." He dwelt on the words with pleasure, while all the time the music in the room beyond rose and fell in soft cadence, till the melody died away on the listening ear.

"It is a lovely voice," he said. "It is more like Eileen's timbre of voice than any I have ever heard. I assure you, Sylvia, she sings divinely."

"You are looking very tired to-night, Sylvia," he said. "You do not take the least care of yourself. I have often wondered why you have never married," he went on.

"Too late in the day to wonder that," said his cousin, carelessly. "Hark! they are singing again." She rose and opened the door into the passage, even the words of the song could be heard. It began:

"There are no eyes whose light has never been blinded
By the silent tears of pity or pain."
The last words died away. Sir James was standing on the lintel of his door. Quick as thought he had his hand on the electric switch in both passage and room, and together the cousins stood waiting in the dark. A silk dress rustled, and the door of the other sitting room opened. A stream of light fell across the passage; in its subdued rays stood Capt. Lowry, tall and straight, and Mr. Payne. He was speaking in low, caressing tones; she was standing, her hand on his detaching arm.

"I must go now, Villiers," she said. "See! they have turned out the lights in the passages."

For a moment they stood together, the light from the room half revealing her beautiful figure, her snowy shoulders, her diamond face upturned to his, the diamonds gleaming in the lace at her breast. The man had his arm around her, and was trying to draw her back into the room.

"Nay," she said, "I cannot stay, I must go home, and be ready for the dread ceremony to-morrow." She said the words slowly, distinctly, and she shuddered ever so little.

In another moment the whole passage was ablaze with light, and Sir James stood before her, his tall figure drawn up, to its full height, his gray lips shaking with passion.

"There will be no ceremony to-morrow, madam," he said. "Not to-morrow, or any other day."

SHEEP FOR HILL FARMS OFFER INDUCEMENTS

Success of a Novel Experiment in New England. Company Formed to Rent Sheep to Farmers—May Be a Solution of the Abandoned Farm Problem—The Scheme Worked in Massachusetts and Vermont.

A company formed to rent sheep to farmers exists in New England. Although farmers have rented sheep to their neighbors for ages this is said to be the first company ever organized for this purpose.

About 6,000 of its sheep were nibbling brushy pastures in one season in Franklin county, the most sparsely settled part of Massachusetts, and in southern Vermont. The cheap lands of the abandoned farm district and the intimidation of the farmer by the ascendant dog are big factors in this enterprise.

Up in hilly Hawley, where some of these flocks are located, a 100 acre pasture, with some good woodland, recently sold for \$175. Buying land up there is a very sporty proposition in return for your \$50 the seller may unload on your innocent head 100 acres, instead of the 50 you thought you were buying.

The western Massachusetts hills are admirably adapted for sheep and once fed flocks ten times as big as now. Mongrel dogs that will kill a score of sheep in a night, together with the fall of wool twenty years ago, put herders out of business.

The country, under Massachusetts law, is supposed to pay for all sheep killed or bitten by dogs, and Franklin county pays yearly thousands of dollars to furnish its taxpayers with this needed relaxation. The growers say, however, that they get little or no compensation for the injury done to flocks that are chased but not actually bitten.

"Will you buy or lease?" asks the company of each inquirer for sheep. The terms of the rental require the lessee to give the company half the increase of lambs, and one-fourth the wool.

"Five minutes bookkeeping," says the doubter, "ought to show the farmer that he would better buy. He can't give up less than the equivalent of \$75 on the lease basis for a flock of fifty. He could buy the same flock for \$400 and \$20 interest."

But the farmer is too cautious for that. Often he has no ready cash. He particularly likes the lease basis since the company assumes all risk from dogs. And so the company has leased about 6,200 sheep, has 700 on its ranches, and has sold only a hundred or two.

As everything depends upon the care that leased sheep get, the company confronts at the start certain typical weaknesses of the Yankee farmer. For one thing, the patient study of scientific animal industry has interested him less than the more adventurous joys of the trader. Leased sheep are inspected regularly by the manager and a certain standard of good care is exacted.

The land used by these sheep lessees is mostly in run down pastures that were growing up to brush. The great trouble with the hill town farmer has been the failure of his crop of boys, lacking whom his profit is eaten up by slow motioned Poles and Finns at \$25 a month and found.

Every year mowing machine, plough and cattle leave wider strips of goldenrod and briars, where another summer the little birches gain foothold, and it all becomes woodland, in a decade. The sheep are turned into fields thus slipping back into the wilderness and soon market them fertile again.

The company's promoters think they have two advantages over the farmer. One is, it should be able to market its product to better advantage than the average farmer, the other, that its sheep are high grade stock.

Many inquiries from all over New England indicate that sheep can be leased for years, perhaps indefinitely. But any given customer will become independent of the company's few years through his share of the flock increase.

The ranch system works very nicely with the lease plan. It is the purpose of the company to establish a ranch in the centre of any district where its sheep are largely leased. The professional shepherd in charge will then have general oversight over leased flocks in that district and give assistance as needed.

Ranching on these old-hills gains so greatly over old time farming largely by the small cost of labor, utensils and machinery. The danger from dogs is still a condition and not theory. Seventy-five company sheep were killed in one year. The farmer may consider that the assumption of the risk by the company distributes losses, and part of his return of lambs and wool is thus in the nature of insurance.

Cold Meals and Alcohol. As if to compensate for the uninviting and possibly, at the outset, depressing aspect of a cold meal, it has been observed that the person to whom, for some special end, it may be, unfortunately circumstances, a warm meal is the exception, commonly exhibits a desire to indulge in alcoholic stimulants.—The Lancet.

SECOND HAND HAT DEALERS. A Trade Which Has Sprung Up in Recent Years in New York City.

One of the most ancient of all trades is that in second hand clothes, and there have been dealers in second hand shoes; but comparatively new is a business established in New York City about a dozen years ago by a man who deals in hats only while running incidentally a hat cleaning establishment.

He buys his hats from wholesale dealers who get them pedlers and old clothes collectors who bring their collections for sale to the second hand clothes exchange. From the stocks of hats which the wholesale dealers in old clothes and apparel thus gather the retail dealer in second hand hats selects such as will be suitable for his trade.

These hats, which may some of them show but little wear, he cleans and presses and blocks if need be, and generally puts in order. If a hat needs a new binding he puts that on or a new band; such a thing has been known as putting a sound crown of a hat with a broken rim into the second rim of a hat that had a broken crown; but as a rule renovation, with perhaps some minor repairs, is with the hats that the dealer buys all that is necessary.

He gets some soft hats, but mostly derbies; and this stock, all put in order, he arranges to display on his shelves, with a little ticket showing its size stuck in the band of each hat, shelf after shelf of hats of various styles and sizes, and thus displayed they make a goodly array.

The dealer has sold as many as four hats to one customer within a single week, the presumption being that at least three of these had been lost or perhaps irretrievably damaged on occasions of more or less festivity. But a man can afford to lose a hat occasionally when they cost but half a dollar apiece, which is the uniform price of all these hats, and for which, the dealer says, you can buy a hat better than new but for a dollar, while it may have been originally a hat of quality.

In fact, at this price the second hand hats command themselves to many buyers, and the dealer is customers who come to him regularly for their hats just as they might come to any hat store.



Robert Hichens.

author of the "Call of Blood" and "The Garden of Allah." It is predicted that he will be one of the foremost of American authors.

Worn Away By Handing.

The touch of thousands of human hands for more than a score of years every week-day in the year has worn away a portion of one of the exhibits of wood at the Smithsonian Institution. The exhibit in question is a carraeta or ox wagon, and stands in the east wing of the Institution. The part of the axle that has been worn away simply by the admiring touch of thousands of visitors protrudes several feet and is easily reached. The wonderful smoothness of the wood which has slowly but surely been worn away is the result.

The old ox wagon is made entirely of cottonwood, and is without a single piece of metal. It was built by Pueblo Indians and is the style used in New Mexico and Arizona. The design is that introduced in this country by the Spaniards many years ago. It is a clumsy affair, with two wheels that are far from being round. For many generations, however, this sort of cart has answered the purpose of transportation for the Pueblo Indians as well as other tribes.

The axle that has been worn away is directly under the sign giving an account of the origin and history of the ox wagon. While reading, nearly every sightseer rests his hand upon the wood, perhaps does a little knocking for good luck, and perchance pokes a splinter. Anyway, the axle end has been worn away, and to-day is as smooth and as shiny as a billiard ball.

Habits of the Bee Martin. A remarkable bird found in Mexico is the bee martin, which has a trick of ruffling up the feathers on the top of its head into the exact semblance of a beautiful flower, and when a bee comes along to sip honey from the supposed flower it is snapped up by the bird.

Telephones in the Forest. The first forest reserve telephone put in by the Federal Government will be a line of 100 miles, costing \$5,000. In the Big Horn forest reserve in Wyoming. This is to secure prompt aid in fighting timber fires.

MCCREA AS A RAILROAD MAN. Began as a Rodman—Success Due to Hard Work.

Another proof that this is a democratic country and that the highest offices are open to the humblest if they have the ability to rise to their opportunities, has been furnished by the greatest railroad in the world, which is trying the experiment of what kind of a president a rodman will make.

It is not so long ago, within the memory of many officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad, that James McCrea, who has succeeded to the mantle of A. J. Cassatt, was only plain "Jim McCrea, and figured on the salary list of the road as a rodman.

He was a good rodman, a hard worker. He has been the same in every other position he has held in the forty-one years he has served the road.

The character of result achieved by the tall, muscular, silent, gut-spoken "Jim" made him a marked man before he had been a rodman for two years. Then came promotions, and four presidents of the road took a pleasure in aiding his



James McCrea.

ambitions. He went up, up through the stages of engineer, superintendent of various divisions, general manager of various roads, fourth vice president, third vice president, second vice president and first vice president.

His election to the headship of the entire concern was no surprise, for it had been known for a long time that he was President Cassatt's preference, and for a couple of years prior to his death, Mr. Cassatt had been grooming McCrea for the place.

This was not alone friendship on the part of the late president. He recognized in Mr. McCrea the one kind of man who never failed in any task imposed on him by the road. He could carry along the huge projects of Mr. Cassatt had planned; there need be no panic when Mr. Cassatt passed, provided the steady hand of "Jim" McCrea took the throttle.

There is no particular romance in the life story of this man, big mentally and physically. His success has not proceeded from strokes of daring, or sudden inspirations. Hard, relentless work has been the only system he knew.

The new head of the Pennsylvania Railroad was born in the home city of that organization, and is 53 years old. His father was a physician, who drifted into banking, and had "Jim" McCrea chosen to take the easier way of life, he could have taken over the business of the father, and settled down to comfort and a reasonable assurance of plenty without having to work very hard to get it.

Ambition was stronger in the younger than love of ease, and after he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania at the close of the Civil War, he looked the field over, and resolved that the probable growth of the Pennsylvania Railroad, then only a struggling suggestion of the mighty power, it has now become, made it a promising career for a young man with both ability and energy.

He applied for a place. Nothing attractive opened, but, undaunted, young McCrea pressed so hard that they made him a rodman. This was in 1865. Before two years passed he received his first promotion, and was made rodman and assistant engineer on the Conellsville and Southern Pennsylvania Railroad.

This first advance convinced the ambitious rodman that he had made no mistake in the choice of an employer, and from that time on he never doubted the wisdom of throwing his whole energy into the cause of the road.

Imitation Horsehair. Imitation horsehair (or procyzila, as it is called) is a cellulose product, and is furnished to the manufacturers in the form of thick threads of every imaginable color, by a German manufacturing trust, with headquarters at Frankfurt. This thread is finished and made into braids in the same way the real silk or real horsehair is prepared. Horsehair is now only used for white or black braids, as it does not take the dye as well as the imitation article, and the cost is greater.

The number of Chinese students in Tokio—8,000—exceeds the number of Japanese students there.