A HUMBLE HEROINE.

A Canadian Story of Simple Life by "Nancy Nugent."

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BESIDE a little gurgling creek two children sat at play.

The boy was lame. One foot was twisted and the leg was short. The back bore the burden so hard to bear, a hump. The face was thin and pale and wore a sad beseeching look, yet not a tinge of discontent lingered in those deep blue eyes.

The other child was one of nature's pets. Every curve was perfect. Eyes of laughing brown flashed and sparkled a dangerous rivalry with the shining waters of the brook. Her head was covered with clustering curls of reddish brown, and nothing else.

They had sat beside the stream since early morning playing with a most peculiar plaything—a diminutive mill. Wheels, saws and belts were perfect, the product of their own little hands.

"I will add a new saw to-morrow, Nanny. Then our mill will be complete."

"But, Ted, it is all nice now."

"Yes, nice, but not finished; besides what would we do if we did not whittle?"

"Quarrel," replied the saucy Nanny.

"We will never quarrel, will we, Nanny?" said Ted, looking lovingly into the mirthful eyes of his little friend.

"No, Ted," she answered, laying her hand on his head, while tender pity softened the mischievous face. "Never, you will always be my Ted."

Crash! A big stone fell crashing through the little mill, splintering its tiny wheels and saws, snapping the dainty belts of kid. The results of weeks of patient whittling, thoughtful ingenuity, lay at their feet a complete wreck.

"Well, Humphy, how do you like that? Come on and fight me now."

A painful flush dyed the pallid face of the lame boy as he encountered the insolent stare of the wretched bully.

"No! but I will!"

Like a young tiger Nanny sprang towards the astonished boy. Seizing him by the collar, she tripped him back. Soon he lay on the grass kicking and screaming with pain, for Nanny had sat down upon him and was showering blows quick and fast on face and ears of the now thoroughly vanquished foe.

"Now, will you call my Ted 'Humphy?' Will you? Will you? You coward! There, you can go now, and when you are ready for another whipping I'll be here."

Seating herself by Ted, she laughingly said: "Didn't I do it well?"

"Yes, dear. But don't fight for me. I am scarcely worth it."

Time passed on. These two, so queerly drawn together, continued their whittling. As they grew older they fashioned chairs and stools, and all the pretty things were kept in order by Nanny in their small workshop in rear of their own small homes.

Nanny and Ted were neighbors. They were now advancing in years; he was 17, she 16. Both must soon choose the weapon they thought best to fight with for their living.

As yet they both were children.

"Nanny, I cannot work to-day; come down by the brook for a talk. Come, dear, do."

Walking slowly, she unconsciously tendered her never-failing support to the poor weary companion of her whole childhood.

As they neared the brook, they met a stranger to their little village. As he passed, Nanny looked up and met the earnest, steadfast gaze of eyes deeply brown as her own. Her breath came fast, while over the dusky face of the stranger there passed a look of reverent admiration.

"Nanny, you tremble, dear. Are you cold?"

"No! Cold this lovely day; you think things, Teddy. I don't think I ever trembled in my life—only the day I licked Percy Grey; but that was with anger. Do you remember the little villain?"

They were now seated where their little mill had been destroyed. An ominous silence sealed both their lips. The brook laughed and flirted as gaily as ever. The leaves above whispered love in low murmuring sounds. Why was Nanny silent?

"Teddy, who was that man with the eyes so dark?"

Her voice had caught the murmuring sweetness of the love-whispering leaves. Her eyes had left their saucy dance to don the misty garb that love so dearly loves. Ted turned, and, looking in her face, knew the change.

'Twas Ted's turn to tremble. The poor, weak, crooked body quivered as cruel Cupid's arrow killed the boy to make the man. With a low moan of anguish, he threw himself on the ground, burying his head in Nanny's lap.

"Nanny, Nanny! O, my Nanny! I am so crooked. I never knew till now how hideous I am, Nanny!"

The last "Nanny" was the wail of a desolate soul.

Two little hands rested on the bowed head.

"Teddy, I love you," she whispered low.

Her little hands stroked gently the bowed head.

"Don't, Teddy, dear. Don't moan so; you are not crooked or hideous to me. We love each other now. Look up!"

Slipping her hand under his head she turned the sorrowing face upward. Bending down she pressed her lips to his.

"I will wait for you, dear. When you have a home for me I will be ready."

* * * * * *

Eyes deeply, darkly brown looked into Nanny's, while a voice full and firm, lowered with the tremulousness of love, told all the love and passion that throbbed with his every pulse.

"Nanny, do you love me? Will you be my wife, little one?"

Nanny raised her eyes and looked calmly into those of him she knew she loved as woman loves but once. Joy, sweetly painful, shook her whole being as she answered low and soft:

"I am waiting for Teddy."

* * * * * *

"I have come for you, Nanny."

"I am waiting for you, Ted dear."

"I have the home all ready; but, my darling, are you quite sure you love me yet? Have none straighter and stronger sought your love and won it?"

"I have waited ten years for you, Teddy. I love you dearly. We will be so happy in our little home."

She again bent her head and pressed her lips to his.

A flush of glad thankfulness covered his male delicate features. Taking her hand in his, they talked long of all the days gone by when she had fought his battles.

They were married quietly one bright morning, and as they journeyed toward their new home he told her of the new mill he had built for them. Ten years this one had taken and all was complete. All it lacked was Nanny's admiration.

"Nanny, would you mind if I took you to see the mill before the home? I love it so. I want to see your bonnie eyes light up with pleasure as you see how I have replaced the old one you and I whittled out and built."

Nanny's face flushed with pleasure.

"Ted, you are able to fight for yourself now. I would like best to see the mill first. It will soon rain and then we will go home."

They soon arrived at the mill with its piles of sweet-smelling pine lumber. As they approached the low, broad building, with its crashing, buzzing, whirring saws, mingled with the grinding, rumbling roar of the huge driving wheels, the water was turned off, and the ponderous wheels sobbed themselves to sleep, as if they felt their usefulness diminished because they could not welcome their creator.

The men advanced in a body, and as Teddy and Nanny came under the roof there arose such a cheer that the wheels and saws grew envious. Their noise had been outnoised. Cheer after cheer accompanied with hurrahs for "the boss and his pretty bride," rang through the mill until Teddy raised his hand and signed silence.

"All to your places; my wife would see the mill!"

Soon the whirring, spinning saws and roaring wheels and clanking chains were shouting their welcome to Nanny with a greater fervor for their temporary restraint.

She inspected every machine that her Teddy had built and without her aid.

"Oh, Teddy, I am so proud of you, my dear. Your mill is perfect."

"Nanny, say 'our mill.' Your tender, loving words by the brook, your gentle 'I love you, Teddy,' gave me the strength to build. Now we will go home; it is getting late." When they reached the road they paused to take one general view of the whole.

Crash, crash! A blinding flash of lightning lit the whole mill. Nanny saw every saw turn to fire. Then a splintering of the huge supporting posts, a rushing crowd of men as they fled from the mill. Soon the flames were seen creeping up around the gang saws. They spread with terrible rapidity among the oil-soaked flooring and stays.

Nanny stood terrified, watching the destruction.

"The boss! the boss!" shouted the men.

Nanny turned to see Teddy lying on the road beside her, dead.

Poor Teddy had been spared the sight of the destruction of his second mill.

Nanny again bent over Teddy's prostrate head. This time she whispered:

"I was true to you, Teddy; I have been yours through life."

Rough hands lifted their light burden gently, as a woman her babe, and carried him to the beautiful home he had made for his Nanny.

He was laid to rest followed only by the men of his mill and Nanny.

* * * *

Again brown eyes looked into Nanny's with a world of yearning. This time hers drooped heavy with their weight of love. The leaves above ceased their love songs to listen to Nanny's.

"I have waited long for you little one—twenty years. You were seventeen when you told me you were waiting for Teddy. Can you love me now?"

One of Nanny's old-time smiles tripped lightly over her dear face as she answered:

"Fall in love at thirty-seven? See my hair—white with the brown."

Coming near to view the white in the little bowed head, he raised her face to his. Looking earnestly into the clear depths of her eyes, he knew she had always loved him. Stooping he received from Nanny her first kiss of love.

Overhead the leaves clapped softly their little hands.

NANCY NUGENT.

Toronto, March, 1892.

Aphorisms.

Diligence is the mother of good fortune.—Cervantes.

Flattery labors under the odious charge of servility.—Tacitus.

Nothing resembles pride so much as discouragement.—Arnicl.

Curiosity is one of the forms of feminine bravery.—Victor Hugo.

Censure is a tax a man pays to the public for being eminent.—Swift.

I hold that gentleman to be best dressed whose dress no one observes.—Trollope.

Talking and eloquence are not the same; to speak and to speak well are two things. A fool may talk, but a wise man speaks.—Ben Jonson.

A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone and die not worth a groat at last.—Franklin.

There is no despair so absolute as that which comes with the first moments of our first great sorrow, when we have not yet known what it is to have suffered and be healed, to have despaired and have recovered hope.—George Eliot.

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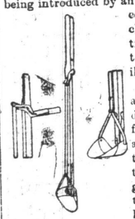

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Doth vigil keep
Forever here; before this shrine
The waters weep.

Methinks a God from some far sphere,
In sportive part,
In ages past wooed Nature here,
And broke her heart.

Robert Loveman, in April Lippincott's.

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C. & O. Railway	7.30	5.15	9.00	5.00
G.T.R. West	7.00	3.25	12.40	p.m. 7.40
R. & N.W.	6.30	4.30	11.10	9.00
T. G. & B.	6.30	3.35	12.30	p.m. 9.30
Midland	6.00	1.40	11.55	10.15
C.V.R.	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
G.W.R.	6.20	12.10	8.00	2.00
		2.00		7.30
		4.00	10.20	8.30
		10.00		
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
U.S.N.Y.	6.30	12.10	8.00	5.45
		4.00	10.30	11 p.m.
		10.00		
U.S. Western States	6.30	10.00	9.00	7.36
	12.00			

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