

STORIES  
POETRY

## The Inglenook

SKETCHES  
TRAVEL

## A CASE OF BEFORE AND AFTER.

There was a long silence. She felt relieved; he felt exasperated.

"Why don't you say something?" he asked, snappishly.

There was more silence.

"Why don't you talk?"

"Because I am heart-sick."

"Humph! Two years ago you were love-sick; now you are heart-sick. Getting to be an invalid!"

"No but two years ago it was a year until we were to be married; now it is a year after we were married."

"It makes a difference, does it?"

"It seems so."

"Well, it has been a mighty long year if I may be as frank as you are."

"Not short and sweet, certainly."

"Why didn't you see this before it was too late?"

"I don't know. We both had good eyes and saw enough of one another. You were always coming to see me."

"Yes, and you always seemed to be looking for me."

"True, but I didn't see you."

"Perhaps we turned the light too low in the parlor."

"And perhaps we trusted too much to the light of the moon."

"But why do you say that you did not see me?"

"Because that was the fact. But let us drop the subject; it is not helping matters."

She left the room and an hour later he left the house. He went over on the other side of town to see his Uncle John.

"What is the matter with you?" exclaimed Uncle John. "You look as glum as if you had met the tax collector and a man with a plumber's bill on the way over."

"Plumber's bill, nothing! It is worse than that!"

"Had some money on deposit when the bankers concluded to save the country, did you?"

"No; worse than that."

"Well, what is it, anyhow?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know! Let us see. How long have you been married?"

"About ten years."

"Ten years! I thought it was only about a year ago that we were over there crowding around you and that handsome young woman, wishing you happiness enough to turn a whole country into a paradise."

"It may be only a year by the almanac, but I'm not counting time that way."

"What does she say?"

"She says she did not see me."

"Well, perhaps she didn't. Possibly that nice, smiling, sweet, young man that she saw at the door with a carnation in his buttonhole and a bunch of roses in his hand was not you. The man she married may have been somebody else. Do you come home to her now just as you used to go to see her when your future mother-in-law wished that you would not come so often or stay so long?"

"I—I—I—"

"Oh, don't stammer so; your case must be diagnosed."

"Perhaps; but don't nose around too much in a fellow's domestic affairs."

"But if that is what ails you, what else can we do? Do you go home to your wife real sweet?"

"Not always."

"If things go wrong at the office do you hold in until you get home and then turn your temper loose on your wife?"

"I—I am sometimes a little cross."

"Do you fuss about the dinner because you are still smarting over some little mishap in business?"

"I never thought of it in that way."

"No; you let your tongue loose, and she had to do the thinking."

"Don't be too hard on a fellow, Uncle John."

"I am not hard on you; I am trying to doctor you up. What did you say when she asked you for money?"

"I don't remember."

"No; but she remembered. You asked what she did with that half-dollar that you gave her the week before, didn't you?"

"I may have done so once or twice."

"What kind of a spring hat did you buy for her?"

"Money matters were a little close with me and—"

"She didn't complain?"

"No."

"But you looked admiringly at the young woman who had come out fresh and blooming from the millinery flower beds, and you dropped a few remarks about wives not keeping up appearances after marriage."

"I may have done so; I forget."

"But she did not forget. Brides have sensitive memories. And you did a lot of other things which you did not do before marriage, and you left another lot which you had been doing, undone?"

"Oh, I suppose I did; but what of it?"

"Only this: you kept it up until she finally told you that she did not see you before marriage. The young man that she saw come smiling into the house, or jumping to pick up her fallen handkerchief, or spending money for things which she did not need, was not you at all. He was another young man. You were only an alias, a fraud. When you married that young woman you ought to have been prosecuted for getting goods under false pretences. You—"

"Hold on, hold on, Uncle John! Let me get out of here before you have me going over the road to the pen. Give me a year to make restitution and then come over and take Thanksgiving dinner with us, and you will see the happiest couple that ever struck the path together."—John Lewis Lexington, in *The Advance*.

## SOLVE THE PROBLEM IF YOU CAN

He was an illiterate cripple and a converted drunkard. He had only one leg, and he was too poor to own a cork leg. He walked with crutches. He stood on the one leg all day in a box factory, nailing boxes. He got home about six o'clock every evening, and, after supper, he visited from home to home in his section of the city, hunting Sunday-school scholars.

Nearly always he found them. On Sunday mornings, he would go by for those who had promised to go with him to his Sunday-school. One Sunday morning he brought nine new pupils—one man, one woman, two big boys, one big girl and four little children. I shook his hand and congratulated him on his new pupils. "Yes, I reckon I did fast rate for one mornin', but I'm a little disappointed. I had fifteen of 'em what promised to come, but the rest of 'em went back on me."

Now here is a simple problem in arithmetic. It is a problem that every man especially ought to work out practically. Here is the problem: If one man with one leg can bring nine new pupils to Sunday-school on one Sunday morning, how many could a man with two legs bring in if he were to really try!—Central Baptist.

## THE STRENUOUS LIFE FOR GIRLS.

I am no advocate of a narrower life for women, but of a life which shall be broad enough for her to unfold her own nature. The worst slavery is that which makes a woman pretend to be a man.

The strenuous life for girls is a form of hysteria. It is a functional disorder. It sacrifices strength for spasms. Suppose she is at college, studying. How shall she get the best intellectual results—accuracy of perception, breadth of vision, delicacy of taste, respect for truth? By disregarding the balance of her physical and mental nature, and plunging into an intense pursuit of special knowledge, a fierce competition for marks and honors and prizes? The achievement, whatever it may be, will hardly compensate her (or us) for its probable cost. Poise is more precious than penetration. Learning may be a climb, but wisdom is a growth. The best that we know is the harvest of a quiet mind. The sanity of scholarship depends upon a normal life. The finest woman's college is a college for women. The best girls in it are never imitation boys.

Let her play tennis, golf, handball, basketball—any game that is worth her candles, with jaws clinched, nerves strained, and eyes greedy for a prize; but let her play it vigorously, freely, happily, first and chiefly for the fun of it, also for the exercise which it gives, and not least for the sake of comradeship—for these three things, and for these only, let a girl play.

It is desirable beyond a question that every girl should be able to earn her living outside of her home, if necessary. The question is whether it is desirable that it should be necessary. I think not. Home-making is the one manufacture in which women will always have the advantage. The woman who makes a home earns her living in the fairest and best way. A living is scant pay for her. She earns happiness and honor. Her price is above rubies. I know of no art that demands as much skill and patience, hard work and happy suggestions, firmness of hand and fineness of touch, as the making of a home. Schools cannot teach it. Genius is not equal to it. It requires inspiration.

It is a long way from such ideals of womanhood as these to the strenuous life—the life that makes a lot of noise but little music. The strenuous life for girls is like martial music for violins. They can play it. But it does not sound well.—Henry Van Dyke, in *Harper's Weekly*.

## MY COTTAGE FIRE.

By John Philo Trowbridge.  
Let others admire the great open fire  
When night winds blow chill o'er the  
garth,  
But give me the glow of coals dying low,  
And only one stick on the hearth.

'Tis then that the room, half-hidden in  
gloom,  
Seems wondrously sheltered apart,  
And memories sweet, on swift-flying feet,  
Come back through the door of my  
heart.

And I bid them remain, as if seraphim  
came,  
And we muse in the silence and  
gloom,  
While the embers decay, and the light  
fades away,  
And stillness encircles the room.