

As the rain began to fall, and we watched the growing twilight from the window, dolefully. Before it was quite dark, however, a cheery lantern swung into the yard and Rufus was ready with umbrellas to take us home. The village streets were yellow rivers by that time, but I was so safe against his shoulder. My arm was clasped close around his neck, and as I grew very sleepy, I was conscious only of the sucking sound of his great boots in the mud, of a strong arm around me, and of a penetrating odor of rank tobacco. Being an unreasonably fastidious child, I loathed the smell, and it is perhaps one of the greatest proofs of my devotion that I could cling to him in spite of it. Rufus is probably the only man I have ever loved who smoked a pipe.

There were other days—bitter, winter days, when the snow lay thick about the church and Rufus could scarcely plough his way through it. But as early as possible he was there, armed with a shovel and unbounded cheerfulness. I loved to be with him. At times I knew his poor rheumatic back pained him cruelly, but he was always ready for a snowball fight with me, while Fritz ran idiotically back and forth through the snow, barking at nothing in particular.

But the long golden summer days were best. I often wakened to the sound of his sickle and the smell of the fresh grass, as he worked about the churchyard. When I went to join him I might find him patiently feeding flies to some bloated hop-toad. He loved all birds and animals and reptiles, too. I have even known him to make friends with the snakes disclosed by his vigorous mowing. At this point, however, my sympathy ceased, owing to an inborn horror of snakes, inherited, no doubt, from my earliest maternal ancestor.

Birds would alight on his finger and seem to understand when he talked to them. It may have been partly due to his influence that I developed such enthusiasm over caterpillars. I used to gather a dozen or more in my apron and amuse myself by letting them crawl all over me, to the great annoyance of my family and friends.

When my pet kitten died and my heart was almost broken, it was Rufus who buried him considerately in the shade of an apple tree. Sympathetically he watched me as I placed upon a piece of slate the inscription:

To the Memory of Thomas Aquinas.
Died June 5, 18—.

Among the many plays of my childhood, funerals were my strong point, but this one came too close. And Rufus understood. It was natural that those loving creatures whom we call lower animals turned to him as did children, in appreciation of that gentleness which is rare in men—so rare that if a woman find it once in all the world, she may well sell all that she hath—to purchase that pearl of great price.

It was a crisp autumn day when I left home to face the difficulties of boarding-school. No one outside of my family felt the break more keenly, I believe, than Rufus. How eager he was to have my letters read to him! When vacations came he was the first at the house—to see how much I had grown, he said. I well

remember his delight when he had persuaded me to read a page or so of Greek to him. He often brought his German newspapers to see if I could read them.

His heart was still in Germany, I really think. He never learned to speak English other than brokenly. Among his many quaint phrases, he often told us, when describing some scene in his early army days, 'I saw it with all both my two eyes.'

Through those few years when I was at home so little, 'all both those two eyes' were growing dimmer. At last the time came when he could no longer read the large clear type in the Bible we had given him—a great grief to him. And we who loved him, watched the sure approach of blindness. The doctor told us that an operation was possible. He was very poor and the best that could be done was to send him to a city hospital as a charity patient. The cataracts were successfully removed, but the pain must have been terrible. So little was done in the case of a free patient to mitigate the suffering. The students who watched the operation said his courage was wonderful.

'Did you like the hospital?' we asked, when he returned. 'Like it?' he said, 'Like it? Why I was like an angel in heaven.' And indeed the face of an angel could scarcely have been more radiant than his, as he saw once more the dear old churchyard and the faces of his friends.

I believe he was very happy after that, but the poor old body was much shattered. One Saturday night he came as usual to close the church after the choir rehearsal. He walked so stiffly that I stopped to ask him particularly about his rheumatism. It was very bad, he said. I watched him anxiously as the bobbing lantern disappeared along the village street. He walked slowly and faithful Fritz followed slowly at his heels.

When the Sabbath dawned he was raving in delirium, and before the sun rose upon another Lord's day, the weary old body lay at rest in the old graveyard. His soul had gone out quietly into the great silence, and all our little world seemed poorer for the loss of a true and tender heart.

Help a Little.

(F. L. N., in 'Good Cheer.')

'Eyes to the blind was I,' God's servant
cried of old,
And in all our lives in some sweet way the
story may be retold.

'Tis the little gift,
Like a sunbeam's rift,
That comforts the heart grown cold.

Just to forget ourselves in a tender Christ-
like way,
And service to render warm with love to
those at our side each day,

Is the joy of living,
This beauty of giving,
For then we live as we pray.

Sample Copies.

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A Double Redemption

(Mabel Earle, in 'The Wellspring.')

The yellow cat rubbed his head and purred against the coal-shed door, where Bob—alias Roberta—was sitting to enumerate her woes.

'Sand heaps and gravel bars,' Bob said, mournfully; 'dandelions and cinders. I don't care if this house is bigger and stylister than the old one on Willow street; I'd rather have a dear yard like that, and less style. Sand heaps aren't stylish. Valentia says there isn't any money to make the yard pretty this spring. Not one dollar, Valentia said. She said it with emphasis, Buttercup. You don't like this place as well as the old house, do you?'

Buttercup signified his sympathy, and Bob, resting her chin on his head, proceeded:—

'There isn't any way out of it, Buttercup, unless we find a way. Valentia talked hall carpeting and dotted Swiss and gas fixtures when I tried to ask her. Of course, she knows. But why couldn't we do the yard ourselves? I'm pretty strong. I think I can spade up the ground, bit by bit—mornings before people are round to see, maybe. And there'll have to be some good black earth. That's the way the Johnsons did. Oh, dear, Buttercup, why didn't we stay on Willow street?'

There was something pathetic about the odd little group in the coal-shed door, whether Bob had fled to avoid the confusion within the house, and to steady her soul with meditation. Bob had been born with a soul above dotted Swiss and the femininities of housekeeping. She said whimsically at times that she had been compelled to be her own brother, the only boy of the family, in spite of the disadvantages of petticoats. At sixteen she detested dress, and sewing, and piano practice, and the other ladylike occupations which Valentia, the ruling power in the motherless home, prescribed as suitable in the intervals of school. Bob liked her books well enough, and stood well in her classes; but best of all she loved to be out of doors, working in a garden or dreaming in a hammock. The removal from the old family home, with its grass and flower-beds, had been to her an unmixed calamity. She viewed with horror the prospect of a summer spent amid the unfinished surroundings of the new house. Valentia herself, if the whole truth were acknowledged, viewed it with equal horror; but the family income had lately suffered from unexpected deficits, in addition to the expense of building. The removal from Willow street, which Bob resented so bitterly, had not been brought about by considerations of style, but by various exigencies which led Valentia to look upon desolate door yards as matters of secondary importance, to be endured with philosophy.

'Valentia, you don't care if "I" do something with this yard, do you?' Bob asked, going into the house where Valentia was making the sewing machine whirl over lengths of white Swiss. 'If I don't spend a cent of the house money?'

Valentia stopped to measure a breadth. 'I suppose you can have some flower beds, if you like,' she answered, with an effort to be kind to this trying younger sister. 'If we smooth down those sand heaps, and carry away that lime and rake