

SOME OLD SCHOOL BOOKS.

I have been back to my home again,
To the place where I was born.
I have heard the wind from the stormy main
Go rustling through the corn:
I have seen the purple hills once more:
I have stood on the rocky coast
Where the waves storm inland to the shore:
But the thing that touched me most

Was a little leather strap that kept
Some school-books, tattered and torn.
I sighed, I smiled, I could have wept,
When I came on them one morn:
For I thought of the merry little lad,
In the mornings sweet and cool,
If weather was good or weather bad,
Going whistling off to school.

My fingers undid the strap again,
And I thought how my hand has changed,
And half in loving, and half in pain.
Backward my memory ranged.
There was the grammar I knew so well—
I didn't remember a rule:
And the old blue spell—I used to spell
Better than any in school.

And the wonderful geography
I've read on the green hill-side.
When I told myself I'd surely see
All lands in the world so wide,
From the Indian homes in the far, far West
To the mystical Cathay.
I have seen them all. But home is best
When the evening shades fall gray.

And there was the old arithmetic.
All tattered and stained with tears.
I and Jamie and little Dick
Were together in by-gone years.
Jamie has gone to the better land:
And I get, now and again,
A letter in Dick's bold, ready hand
From some great Western plain.

There wasn't a book, and scarce a page,
That hadn't some memory
Of days that seemed like a golden age.
Of friends I shall no more see.
And so I picked up the books again
And buckled the strap once more.
And brought them over the tossing main:
Come, children, and look them o'er.

And there they lay on a little stand,
Not far from the Holy Book:
And his boys and girls with loving care
O'er grammar and speller look.
He said, "They speak to me, children dear,
Of a past without annoy:
And the Book of Books in promise clear
Of a future full of joy."

A TRAGEDY OF TO-DAY.

The long, sinuous, half-living, half-breathing monster, with its freight of human bodies and human souls, sped on its way from ocean to ocean. The weary mortals that it bore felt every joint and sinew within their tired frames throb and ache with the unaccustomedness of the rapid transit, and turned in vain from scanning the monotony of the prairie scenery to the still more monotonous and unchanging faces and conversation of their fellow-travelers.

One only among them all held some claim to interest even after the tediousness of hours of companionship. One only seemed as one set apart; as an outsider, whose way might lie with theirs for the present, but whose life or purpose they might never know.

When she had entered no one could tell, whither she was bound none among them could ascertain, though, in the first glow of interest at the welcome sight of a strange face, many had gathered about, and, under one pretense or another, had asked the question, only to be met with so chilling and yet so timid a response, that out of mere kindness to her as well as respect for themselves they could advance no further.

So she had been left to herself and her own thoughts—this young, girlish woman, with her English skin and English voice—and her thoughts were not dear companions just then, to judge from her set mouth and frightened eyes—eyes that grew shade by shade less fearful as mile after mile was left behind.

The train official when questioned gave but scant replies, though he might have told, had not a keen sense of honor prevented, of a young Englishwoman with frightened eyes, coming to him during the brief stoppage at a wayside village and imploring him to take her on with him—to take her small stock of ornaments—a chain, a ring, and an old-fashioned brooch—in payment for her passage-right.

So the hours passed by. Her fellow-travelers using one means or another to beguile away the long days, ever and anon glancing towards her in half-doubtful, half-questioning kindness, but always repelled; and she, the self-made pariah, shrinking further and further away from them all.

Gradually the nervous tremor that always overtook her as the speed began to slacken and the voice of the engine called forth the warning to the approaching halting place, wore away. She seemed more at ease, less overwrought. While passing through the smiling farm country and mountainous regions of Pennsylvania, she took from her small bag two objects that her nearest neighbor craned his neck in vain to see, thinking to obtain a clew to the mystery that surrounded her.

One was a tiny slip cut from an Eastern paper, the advertisement of a firm who pandered to the modern mania for æsthetic furnishings and costumes, who made a specialty of modern old English embroideries. The other was a bit of creamy satin upon whose surface a cunning hand had wrought a device of dog-violets and forget-me-nots with sprays of the

English ivy—wrought so perfectly, with such exactitude of form and color that they seemed to live, to grow upon their silken background.

At last the journey's end came; the terminus was reached, and, in the hurry and confusion attending the arrival, none noted or thought of the lonely woman, who, in her utter bewilderment, stood gazing about, this way and then that, watching the forms of the retreating ones, entirely at a loss as to which direction to take, which course to pursue.

By a question here and a direction there; by pushing her way through the chance openings in a crowd that seemed all elbows and sharp protruding angles, now and again regaining breath and strength after the encounter in the quiet desolation of some unfrequented street, she at length arrived at the address printed on the bit of paper so carefully treasured.

Here, after making known her errand and exhibiting her perfect work, she was immediately engaged as one of the many hands employed in the creation of the artistic needle work for which this firm has become world-renowned, and over which half the cultivated members of the earth's family—the ones who know—have gone mad.

Before allowing her to leave, her employer beckoned to one of the many accountants engaged in adding the long columns representing the enormous profits of the firm, and subtracting from them the proportionately small sum given as a recompense to those whose skill and labor had been, metaphorically speaking, the geese which laid these golden eggs, and motioned him towards the waiting woman.

"Your name?" asked the beckoned one, with a kindly smile at the pale face now before him.

The woman stammered and hesitated.

"Mrs.——" she began at last. "No! I mean Gwendoline Darcy."

"A false name," thought the man, as he entered it at the foot of the long list, but he will smile at her, as Malcolm Goodale always smiled at any woman who seemed to need friendly sympathy.

"Now your place of residence, please," he added, looking up from his ponderous volume. Gwendoline started and flushed.

The young man instantly guessed at the situation.

"You have no present home," he suggested, pleasantly, as if such a fact were a matter of small moment. "Then I would advise you to let me take you to my boarding place," continued this befriender of helpless womanhood, this modern knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. "Many of the embroidery girls stay there, and it's a pleasant enough place, clean and home-like."

Two years had passed since Gwendoline's long, solitary journey from West to East. Two years, during which her skilled hand, quick eye and artistic mind had served to keep her, not in the luxuries, but in more than the bare necessities of life—the food and shelter for mere physical well-being.

That she was happy in her new home and employment none could doubt who saw the old bloom returning to her pleasant face, the old merry sparkle to her deep, blue eyes.

And yet, with it all, there still hung an air of mystery, of secret sorrow, about her. A month of careless, happy living, when every day seemed to bring new pleasure; every week had in its train new enjoyments, when her fellow-workers and companions would be attracted towards her by the very buoyant joyfulness and freedom from care that seemed to encircle her, would be followed by a fit of such deep despondency, such bitter pain, that all would shrink away again, repelled by the sudden change, the unaccountable demeanor.

Through all the varied experience of the past months Malcolm Goodale had befriended her. His first interest had never flagged. His help and advice had been hers in all her troubles and perplexities.

With all his love of ease and comfort, his laughing, careless good nature, he could never see a woman suffering for the lack of aid without offering his assistance in the difficulty. He might regret it, he might chafe angrily against the self-imposed duty afterwards, but the first impulse was always to take some of the burden from the feeble hands.

In this instance there was something more than a mere kindly impulse. Now it had become a pleasure to lend his strong manhood to another. To see the flush mounting slowly into Gwendoline's pale cheeks, to see the fearful shadow daily retreating from her eyes, were all the return he asked for his services—services that had been taxed not a little during the utter strangeness and unusedness of her first winter in her new home.

There can be but one ending to such companionship. The result must inevitably be the same when a lonely, friendless girl finds her one support, her only counselor, in a man of her own age; who, in his overflowing good nature, gives comfort and cheer to all who stand in need, but keeps something deeper and higher than mere outward service for her alone.

Of course, the women, her fellow boarders, noted this fact. One might as reasonably hope to control the movements of the heavenly bodies, to "bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion," as to conceal an active love story from the feminine eyes, that are so quick to observe its first tokens. They were not slow to disclose to Gwendoline, by smiles and

innuendos, their knowledge of all that was occurring. For a time she seemed unable to comprehend the meaning of their byplay, but one day when she heard her name connected with young Goodale's, in an unmistakable way and with unmistakable significance, she seemed like one waking from a happy dream to the bitter realities of life again.

At last a crisis came.

One evening, wet, rainy and disagreeable, as she returned from carrying to her employers her latest handiwork, a masterpiece in its way—a screen, on whose rough, silky groundwork bloomed a cluster of pure ox-eyed daisies and feathery maiden-hair fern—as she struggled bravely on, proving the truth of the reverse of the axiom that "two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time" by the fact that both hands could not be used to steady the wind-blown umbrella, and yet one perform the office of lifting her dragging skirts from the pavement, she heard well-known footsteps hurrying towards her, and in a moment more they had overtaken her, and Malcolm was at her side.

She gave a sigh of relief as he took the bobbing umbrella out of her weary hands and held it firmly in his own.

"Oh, how nice it seems," she said, looking up at him with a smile as she rescued her already damp garments from further damage—"how nice it is to have somebody to take care of one."

"Do you think so, Gwen?" he asked, a light flashing from his face. "Then, my dear, I am sure you will be willing to grant me the privilege of taking care of you always. You must know how much I love you, how gladly I would relieve you from all care and sorrow, how willingly I would shield you from all hardship," his young, rather weak face wearing a more steady, more determined look in the strength of his purpose to be all he had said, ay, and far more to the woman by his side. "I am certain you care for me," he added, a ring of triumph in his clear voice, as he looked down, sure of his answer.

There was no happy light in her face. Her lips were set and bloodless, the old fear had returned to her eyes.

"Why, Gwen, my darling!" he gasped, startled by the sudden transformation. "What, what is it?"

"Don't ask me, don't speak to me!" said the girl, almost fiercely, and as the door of her stopping-place was now reached, she sprang from him and rushed away—to be alone—away from him, from every one!

"What have I ever done!" she thought, bitterly, as, locked into her little room, she buried her face deep in the pillows of the narrow bed, and clinched her hands till the stretched cords cramped. "Why must my life be so different, so unlike others? How happy, oh, how happy I might be if only I dared! But I cannot—I cannot!" Her strained eyes burning hot, a shower of golden sparks falling endlessly before them, buried as they were in the soft down.

Lying thus she heard a footstep coming along the hall, then a soft knock at her door.

"Gwen!" called the voice of one of her girl friends. "Gwen! I have something for you. Something from Mr. Goodale," with a laugh.

There was no answer, and the girl without, never guessing of the anguish, the hopeless misery, of the girl within, slipped a small mischievous key beneath the warped door, and went away, saying to herself, "She will find it when she comes," wishing that she, too, might find the beginning of her life's romance.

How many hours passed by while she lay there in a sort of bodily stupor, only the poor racked brain fighting hopelessly against its new burden of sorrow, Gwen never knew. Long after the lighted street-lamp had thrown its bright reflection across her floor, she slowly rose and, lighting her own gas-jet, picked up the small note from beneath the door-sill and read it.

It was what she knew it must be—an expostulation against her strange conduct; an answer asked for; a right demanded.

She sat motionless for a moment, then a look of stern determination hardened her features.

"I must tell him," she said to herself. "He is right when he claims the knowledge. But, oh! my God! how hard it is to tell it—the shameful story!"

She took up her desk, itself a keen reminder of her lover, for he had given it as a Christmas present to her—a welcome gift at the time—when, though the very poorest were giving and receiving loving tokens, she in her loneliness had felt herself set apart from the merry throng in their holiday gladness; and, with a white, rigid face wrote.

In few words and brief sentences her secret was told. A pitiful tale of wrong done under the guise of religious sanction—of sorrow and misery that must haunt her until death brought a merciful relief.

The daughter of a well-to-do English farmer, her childhood's days had been passed in innocent and peaceful solitude. Then nothing had given warning of the cruel fate that was to claim her. It was not until after the death of both parents that any cloud of trouble or care, even "the size of a man's hand," had appeared upon her horizon. Since then a tempest had overwhelmed and engulfed her, body and soul. A prophet from the Western World had come to the small village where she had stopped after her bereavement, and, hearing of her land's property, her farm with its acres of golden grain, her orchards with their fruit-bent boughs, had

used the full measure of his eloquence in expounding to her the new faith.

Small wonder that, coming as he did in the newness of her first sorrow, she listened to his subtly worded phrases—listened and believed. Small wonder that, soothed, flattered, persuaded by his oily tongue and mock sympathy, she consented to give up her English home to go with him.

She thought with the apostle of old that in acting under this man's advice she was "doing God's service." She found, when bound by irrevocable ties, that she was in the very hot-house of corruption; that though in a land that drew up long codes of law against bigamy, she had been led into a community that recognized no such law, that claimed the freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and yet violated openly and professedly one of His solemn commandments.

The horror of the dawning truth had almost maddened her; had crushed from her brain all thought and purpose save that of escape. This she had at length accomplished, but time alone could obliterate the fear, the awful dread, that, though living under the much vaunted freedom of the Stripes and Stars, she could, if retaken, if discovered through all her safeguards of name and distant habitation, be forced back into the sinful life, into the home over which three others beside herself ruled as mistresses in lieu of their marriage rights.

Time had gradually obliterated this haunting truth, time and the cheery presence of her new friend.

With the sorrow of to-day it had all come back. With every impulse of heart and nature she turned to the new life offered her, only to realize more cruelly the nature of the tie that held her back.

For one wild instant an alternative course flashed o'er her mind.

What need to tell all this, to inflict pain on another? Why not take the goods the gods had sent her? Surely the high Power, if there were any high Power that controlled the world, had forgotten her. Why not exclaim:

"Evil, be thou my good!"

And so exchange her present lot for one far happier, far more satisfying!

Her early training, the remembrance of her mother, all her home-life and home lessons forbade such a course.

The thought of the easy path to happiness for herself and another that lay through a divorce court never darkened her mind. She believed too implicitly in human inability to annul the binding force of the words she had spoken on her wedding morn.

And so, with a mind torn between duty and inclinations with hands that trembled and a heart that moaned in its agony, she finished and folded her letter.

"Oh, my love—my love," she sobbed, as she wrote the familiar name, "how can I give you up?"

For the next week there was a lull as of the calm that succeeds the tempest. Gwendoline went about as one in a dream. Malcolm was not in his accustomed place; she was spared the sorrow of seeing his anguish.

Then he came back to her, haggard and worn, rebelling against her decree, claiming his own, bringing all the sophistry of the age to bear on her firm resolution.

"You are not that man's wife, Gwen. You must acknowledge that. You are but one of four; he has no claim on you."

"I was his first wife," she answered, striving to keep her brain clear through this last severe test. "I am his wife. I cannot live with him. I cannot cleave to him in his evil ways—his self-styled religion; but I can marry no other," her lips and voice trembling over the last words, her eyes flashing one answering gleam of love at the man she was thus renouncing.

A wicked light shone on Malcolm's excited face as her firm opposition spurred him on to sharper resistance—to closer argument.

"I will win her yet," he muttered, as he turned to leave her, watching the slight figure with its bent head and hidden face. "She cannot hold out. To-morrow she must surely yield."

But with the coming of the morrow the young Englishwoman's place was vacant; her handiwork was left for another's completion. She had again sought for safety in flight. She had vanished as she had appeared, leaving no clew, no trace by which she might be followed; leaving only in one heart the bitter memory of her love and loss; bearing with her only the shame and pain of her sorrowful secret.

MRS. AUGUSTA EVANS WILSON, the novelist, of Alabama, has a very fine dairy in which she takes much pride. Her Jersey cows take prizes. She personally attends to the making of jams and jellies, and her guests at Mobile praise her excellent home-made wine.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N.Y.