

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS.

Mrs. Gemmell had had her share of troubles, and even her joys had been salted with perplexities. Her marriage had been a happy one, but the young wife and mother had carried a heavy burden of care for an invalid sister who lived with her. Her dearly beloved parents died suddenly of pneumonia in a distant city. Her children had illness after illness, and at last the boy died, leaving one delicate girl. Then her husband's large property had been tied up by complicated litigation, and for years actual poverty stared them in the face. While her husband was in the West, looking after his interests, he had been killed by a fall from his horse. She could not think even now of the anguish of that time—the cruel telegram from a stranger, and then the letters which followed every day for a week, written by the hand now cold in death. Finally, there came a legal decision which made her a very rich woman. If her husband might but have known! Her crushed and bewildered spirit strove in vain for light upon the path of life, and seeking peace, she found it not.

Mrs. Gemmell had come by slow steps to be fearful of what might happen to her next. She had had a high courage, but it had been beaten out of her. She trembled at the mere thought of further pain. She had lost confidence in the earth under her feet.

This distrust took one curious form. She dreaded to receive a letter. "Don't at it!" she would say to her friends. It chanced that the gray-coated postman on her street was slow of foot. She would stand at the window and watch his deliberate progress with an agony of apprehension. She hated him. She was conscious of how wicked and how foolish was the feeling, but she could not shake it off.

All this tragedy in the woman's life had taken years for its working out, and one winter it reached its climax.

Restless, lonely, comfortless, she went one night to a special meeting at the church. She heard a sermon on "Who is my neighbor?" The speaker had a passionate sincerity which touched her. He pleaded for human compassion. He pictured the hell of the joyless heart. He declared there was no consolation wrought by grief and loss such as could be brought by selfishness. He adjured his hearers to open their eyes to the needs at their doors. Especially if there was one who was cherishing "a root of bitterness"—a hatred of any other human being—he entreated that another sun might not set upon that sin.

The next morning a new postman came quickly down the street. Mrs. Gemmell saw him with a sharp pang, which she recognized as remorse. How had she ever touched the life of this hobbling old fellow whose place this boy filled? But she hurried to the door to inquire. "Yes, Morris was laid up; he had those heart 'apels'; he might drop any time; it was hard on him, because he had a paralyzed son. He worried a good deal about the boy."

Mrs. Gemmell hastily waited for the end of the story. Morris lived in a modest suburb, but she was going to see him, and the last thing she did before she left was to slip her checkbook into her pocket.

She never quite knew herself what happened in that early call, but Morris believed she was sent by God. He was a pious old Scotchman, and when, after an hour's friendly conversation, a few strokes of a pen lifted the mortgage on his house and made skilful surgery a possibility for his lame boy, the world was changed for him as by a divine miracle.

But Mrs. Gemmell herself was the greatest gainer by the impulse of that morning. "The root of bitterness" she plucked out with that one generous, wholehearted piece of neighborliness. It was wonderful to her how the whole face of the day was changed by filling those bitter morning moments in which she watched for the postman with the compassionate desire to know how he was, and how his boy had slept. She forgot to dread his news in the wish to help him. Before she knew what had really been wrought in her by that evening sermon the preacher had left the city. But his word is passing on through this woman's generous deeds and tender sympathy, and it has shed its cheer on many other lives while it has transformed her own.—*Youth's Companion.*

SIR SUMMER.

When conquering Summer stalks the street

His eyes are eyes of fire,
The pavement burns beneath his feet,
Men drop before his ire;
But yonder, out upon the land,
His manners are not there;
He is a courteous mild and bland
Beneath the maple trees.

He throws his backer on the grass
Unclasses his encased blade,
He doles his helmet and cuirass,
And lounges in the shade;
His pennon, fastened to a bough,
Is fluttering in the breeze;
He is at home and happy now
Beneath the maple trees.

No furious rage disturbs his breast,
No fever heats his brain;
Right cheerily he takes his rest
And views his glad domain;
His lady seated by his side,
His children on his knees,
His heart expands with joy and pride
Beneath the maple trees.

He hears the happy farmer folk
Who toss the fragrant hay;
Blessings upon him they invoke
And beg of him to stay,
The music of the feathered choirs,
The murmur of the bees,
Are sounds of which he never tires
Beneath the maple trees.

He hums a sweet melodious tune;
His hand a garland weaves;
He talks the while he leans at noon;
His laughter shakes the leaves.
He tells of conquests in the south,
Of triumphs over seas,
Of realms redeemed and deeds of drouth
Beneath the maple trees.

He shouts and holds his jolly sides
And strikes his lusty thigh;
To think of how Sir Summer hides
His face when he is nigh,
Or how with city exquisites
His swagger disagrees;
Thus glad Sir Summer gaily sits
Beneath the maple trees.

I know where I can find his bower
Upon a wooded hill,
Where I can pluck his favorite flower
And bathe within his rill;
And thither I will take my flight,
And loiter at my ease,
And pay my homage to the Knight,
Beneath the maple trees.

M. M. Mackreacher.

Forty years ago the Landes district of France was the poorest. Its afforestation had added some forty millions sterling to the wealth of the country.

The Arabs show their friendliness when meeting by shaking hands six or eight times. Arabs of distinction go beyond this—they embrace each other several times.

HOW TO KNOW A LADY.

I have read many articles purporting to show how a lady may be known. In one of these articles it was asserted that "a lady may be known by her boots"; in another, "that she may be known by her gloves," "by her neck-wear, etc. A writer who claimed to be a close observer said that if you saw him but a glimpse or a woman's handkerchief he would tell you whether or not the owner was worthy to bear the title of lady.

I once heard a gentleman say: "A lady is judged by her laugh." Again I have heard: "You can tell a lady by her voice, by the care of her hands and nails, and by the letter she writes." So I began to put these things to the test, and I now tell you the result of my observation.

1. The Boot Test.—The last seat in the car was taken by a faultlessly attired beauty. She had a pretty foot and wore an elegant shoe, which fitted her perfectly. Then a tired-looking mother carrying a heavy, iron-clad baby, entered the car, and stood leaning on to a strap, until a very aged and trembling man—evidently a gentleman—insisted that she take his seat, while he held to the strap. My beauty in the patent leather boots had never thought to offer her seat or to hold the baby for the mother.

2. The Handkerchief and Glove Test.—In a large dry-goods store I saw a clerk cross the house to pick up a dainty cambric handkerchief for a customer. The handkerchief was accepted by a hand in a neat kid glove; but the owner did not thank the clerk, nor cast even a grateful or pleasant glance in acknowledgment of the favor she had received.

3. The Laugh Test.—I heard a merry-ringing laugh which I would have declared came from a pure, as well as a happy heart; and I afterwards heard the laughter say to her mother: "It's none of your business who my letters are from."

4. The Voice Test.—I heard a reader give in the sweetest, most musical voice that old but beautiful poem, "Somebody's Mother," and the next day I saw that same reader laugh immoderately at an old woman who fell and scattered her market-groceries over the pavement.

5. The Hand Test.—Over the keys of the piano swiftly and gracefully moved hands that might well serve as models for sculptor or painter, but those hands on a bitter cold day, rudely closed the door in the face of a woman who was asking alms.

6. The Letter Test.—I once read some letters of faultless rhetoric and pleasing style. They modestly encouraged the attentions of a fond lover; but I learned that the writing of those letters was but the past-time of a heartless flirt.

Then I concluded that, while a lady should be scrupulously neat in her dress, she should cultivate sweetness of voice, and should be able to write an elegant letter; yet all these qualifications, if combined with selfishness or rudeness, would fail to constitute a lady, for one of the chief characteristics of a lady must be forgetfulness of self and consideration for the want of others.—*Selected.*

SUMMER OUTING.

"Routes and Fares for Summer Tours" is the title of a book issued by the Grand Trunk Railway System which is full of interest to the summer tourist who is planning an outing for 1906. In addition to general information, the contents contain particulars of different routes and fares to points in all parts of the country and cover the principal resorts reached by the lines of the Grand Trunk and its connections. It contains a fund of information that will be of great help to those who have not yet decided where to spend their holidays. The book also contains a series of maps for reference. Write to-day for a copy to, J. Quinlan, Bonaventure Station, Montreal.