



Whatever the weather may be, my dears,
Whatever the weather may be,
It's the song ye sing and the smile ye wear,
That's making the sunshine everywhere,
Whatever the weather may be, my dear,
Whatever the weather may be.

—J. Whitcombe Riley.

A FAIR BARBARIAN.

BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

CHAPTER I.

Miss Octavia Bassett.

Slowbridge had been shaken to its foundations. It may as well be explained, however, at the outset, that it would not have taken much of a sensation to give Slowbridge a great shock. In the first place, Slowbridge was not used to sensations, and was used to going on the even and respectable tenor of its way, regarding the outside world with private distrust, if not with open disfavor. The new mills had been a trial to Slowbridge,—a sore trial. On being told of the owners' plan of building them, old Lady Theobald, who was the corner-stone of the social edifice of Slowbridge, was said, by a spectator, to have turned deathly pale with rage; and on the first day of their being opened in working order, she had taken to her bed, and remained shut up in her darkened room for a week, refusing to see anybody, and even going so far as to send a scathing message to the curate of St. James, who called in fear and trembling, because he was afraid to stay away.

"With mills and mill-hands" her ladyship announced to Mr. Burmestone, the mill-owner, when chance first threw them together, "with mills and mill-hands come murder, massacre, and mob law." And she said it so loud, and with so stern an air of conviction, that the two Misses Briarton, who were of a timorous and fearful nature, dropped their buttered muffins (it was at one of the tea-parties which were Slowbridge's only dissipation), and shuddered hysterically, feeling that their fate was sealed, and that they might, any night, find three masculine mill-hands secreted under their beds, with bludgeons. But as no massacres took place, and the mill-hands were pretty regular in their habits, and even went so far as to send their children to Lady Theobald's free school, and accepted the tracts left weekly at their doors, whether they could read or not, Slowbridge gradually recovered from the shock of finding itself forced to exist in close proximity to mills, and was just settling itself to sleep—the sleep of the just—again, when, as I have said, it was shaken to its foundations.

It was Miss Belinda Bassett who received the first shock. Miss Belinda Bassett was a decorous little maiden lady, who lived in a decorous little house on High Street (which was considered a very genteel street in Slowbridge). She had lived in the same house all her life, her father had lived in it, and so also had her grandfather. She had gone out, to take tea, from its doors two or three times a week, ever since she had been twenty; and she had had her little tea-parties in its front parlor as often as any other genteel Slowbridge entertainer. She had risen at seven, breakfasted at eight, dined at two, taken tea at five, and gone to bed at ten, with such regularity for fifty years, that to rise at eight, breakfast at nine, dine at three, and take tea at six, and go to bed at eleven, would, she was firmly convinced, be but "to fly in the face of Providence," as she put it, and sign her own death-warrant. Consequently, it is easy to imagine what a tremor and excitement seized her when, one afternoon, as she sat waiting for her tea, a coach from the Blue Lion dashed—or, at least, almost dashed—up to the front door, a young lady got out, and the next minute the handmaiden, Mary Anne, threw open the door of the parlor, announcing, without the least preface,—

"Your niece, mum, from 'Meriker!'"

Miss Belinda got up, feeling that her knees really trembled beneath her.

In Slowbridge, America was not approved of—in fact, was almost entirely ignored, as a country where, to quote Lady Theobald, "the laws were loose, and the prevailing sentiments revolutionary." It was not considered good taste to know Americans,—which was not unfortunate, as there were none to know; and Miss Belinda Bassett had always felt a delicacy in mentioning her only brother, who had emigrated to the States, and who, in the first disgraced years of the American Revolution, had been a member of the army of the rebels. Her father, however, had followed

could stretch himself, and not be bullied by a lot of old tabbies." From the day of his departure, when he had left Miss Belinda bathed in tears of anguish, she had heard nothing of him; and here upon the threshold stood Mary Anne, with delighted eagerness in her countenance, repeating,—

"Your niece, mum from 'Meriker!'"

And, with the words, her niece entered.

Miss Belinda put her hand to her heart.

The young lady thus announced was the prettiest, and at the same time the most extraordinary-looking, young lady she had ever seen in her life. Slowbridge contained nothing approaching this niece. Her dress was so very stylish that it was quite startling in its effect; her forehead was covered down to her large, pretty eyes themselves, with curls of yellow-brown hair; and her slender throat was swathed round and round with a grand scarf of black lace.

She made a step forward, and then stopped, looking at Miss Belinda. Her eyes suddenly, to Miss Belinda's amazement, filled with tears.

"Didn't you," she said,—"oh, dear, didn't you get the letter?"

"The—the letter!" faltered Miss Belinda, "What letter, my—my dear?"

"Pa's," was the answer. "Oh! I see you didn't."

And she sank into the nearest chair, putting her hands up to her face, and beginning to cry outright.

"I—am Octavia B—bassett," she said. "We were coming to surprise you, and travel in Europe; but the mines went wrong, and p—pa was obliged to go back to Nevada."

"The mines?" gasped Miss Belinda.

"S—silver-mines," wept Octavia. "And we had scarcely landed when Piper cabled, and pa had to turn back. It was something about shares, and he may have lost his last dollar."

Miss Belinda sank into a chair herself.

"Mary Anne," she said faintly, "bring me a glass of water."

Her tone was such that Octavia removed her handkerchief from her eyes, and sat up to examine her.

"Are you frightened?" she asked, in some alarm.

Miss Belinda took a sip of the water brought by her handmaiden, replaced the glass upon the salver, and shook her head deprecatingly.

"Not exactly frightened, my dear," she said, "but so amazed that I find it difficult to collect myself."

Octavia put up her handkerchief again to wipe away a sudden new gush of tears.

"If shares intended to go down," she said, "I don't see why they couldn't go down before we started, instead of waiting until we got over here, and then spoiling everything."

"Providence, my dear," began Miss Belinda.

But she was interrupted by the re-entrance of Mary Anne.

"The man from the Lion, mum, wants to know what's to be done with the trunks. There's six of 'em, an' they're all that 'eavy as he says he wouldn't lift one alone for ten shilling."

"Six!" exclaimed Miss Belinda. "Whose are they?"

"Mine," replied Octavia. "Wait a minute. I'll go out to him."

Miss Belinda was astounded afresh by the alacrity with which her niece seemed to forget her troubles, and rise to the occasion. The girl ran to the front door as if she was quite used to directing her own affairs, and began to issue her orders.

"You will have to get another man," she said. "You might have known that. Go and get one somewhere."

And when the man went off, grumbling a little, and evidently rather at a loss before such peremptory coolness, she turned to Miss Belinda.

"Where must he put them?" she asked.

It did not seem to have occurred to her once that her identity might be doubted, and some slight obstacles arise before her.

"I am afraid," faltered Miss Belinda, "that five of them will have to be put in the attic."

And in fifteen minutes five of them were put in the attic, and the sixth—the biggest of all—stood in the trim little spare chamber, and pretty Miss Octavia had sunk into a puffy little chintz-covered easy-chair, while her newly-found relative stood before her, making the most laudable efforts to recover her equilibrium, and not to feel as if her head were spinning round and round.

CHAPTER II.

"An Investment, Anyway."

The natural result of these efforts was, that Miss Belinda was moved to shed a few tears.

"I hope you will excuse my being too startled to say I was glad to see you," she said. "I have not seen my brother for thirty years, and I was very fond of him."

"He said you were," answered Octavia; "and he was very fond of you too. He didn't write to you, because he made up his mind not to let you hear from him until he was a rich man; and then he thought he would wait until he could come home and surprise you. He was awfully disappointed when he had to go back without seeing you."

"Poor, dear Martin!" wept Miss Belinda gently.

"Such a journey!"

Octavia opened her charming eyes in surprise.

"Oh, he'll come back again!" she said. "And he doesn't mind the journey. The journey is nothing, you know."

(To be continued.)

Christmas Gifts.

Now that Christmas season is near, a few hints on making Christmas gifts may be seasonable. Emerson says: "But our tokens of compliment and love are for the most part barbarous. Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Therefore, the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn; the miner, a gem; the sailor, coral and shells; the painter, his picture; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing. This is right and pleasing. . . . But it is a cold, lifeless business when you go to the shops to buy me something which does not represent your life and talent, but a goldsmith's." . . . Now, we know that ninety-nine people out of a hundred give, at Christmas, just such things as those which Emerson has condemned. There are usually so many gifts to be prepared, and so little time to prepare them in, and it is so easy just to run down to the store and buy them already complete. And, too, we argue that gifts which we buy are, after all, parts of ourselves to a certain extent, since they are, in a way, indexes of our taste, or our judgment, or our character. Nevertheless, in our heart of hearts, we feel that the eminent philosopher is right, and that our gifts should really be bits of our own lives plucked out and given to those we love; little things that we have made with our own fingers, or planned in our own minds. For those who wish to give in this way, the following hints may prove useful:

CALENDARS: NO. 1.—Get some thick water-colored paper. Cut out four oblong leaves of any size desired, having the set of four, of course, of the same size. Finish each about the edge prettily, by "pinking," or tracing with some running design in water colors. Upon these leaflets, now paint in water colors some design to represent the seasons—winter, spring, summer and autumn. If you cannot paint, paste on each one a little engraving or an unmounted photo (landscape or animals preferred), leaving room at the side or bottom upon which to trace the calendar part. This may be done with olive-green ink, or gold or silver paint. If neither the engravings nor the photos are available, a quotation may be neatly written on each leaflet, and a design in pressed ferns, mosses or seaweed securely glued on each for ornament. Last of all, put the leaflets together by means of two little rings pressed through the top, and slip through the rings a small chain or satin ribbon to hang the calendar up by.

NO. 2.—A very attractive calendar may be made of birch-bark. Take a piece about nine inches long and seven wide. Tack it securely on a piece of thin board, or mount on very heavy cardboard. Bind the two all round with ribbon or frame them in passe-partout. Ornament with pressed mosses or seaweed, or outline upon it, in brown tints, some simple design representing Indian wigwams, or some such device. Now, attach to the whole a bunch of calendar leaves which may be procured already printed. Gilt-headed tacks will do the attaching very nicely, if the calendar be mounted on a board, and will also pin down the ribbons by which the calendar is to be suspended. A similar calendar may be made of chamois leather. A design traced upon chamois in browns will resemble very closely the burnt-leather work now so much in vogue.

COLLARS.—Pretty collars are always appreciated by a dainty woman. The foundations for these may now be obtained in the store, all ready to be trimmed. A little lace, or applique, some narrow ribbon and some ingenuity are all that is necessary to transform these into very pretty and useful Christmas gifts. Any handy girl can make one in less than an hour.

PHOTO FRAMES.—Take a piece of fine white linen, cut it into pieces of the size required for the photo frames. Mark the portion which the photo is to occupy. About this, now work with embroidery silk, any design that pleases you. Hollyberries and leaves are easy; so also are forget-me-nots, or violets. Cut out the portion required for the photo, and turn back the edge neatly, or bind with narrow white ribbon. Tack the photo in place on a piece of very stiff cardboard. Stretch the linen portion over this, and fasten very firmly at the back of the cardboard. Now place another piece of cardboard over the back for a finish, and glue on very strongly. Put in little rings to hang the frame up by, or glue on a bit of cardboard to make it stand up as though on a little easel.

SHAVING-PAPER HOLDER.—Embroider a design in silk upon a piece of felt; or mount a pretty landscape on a piece of very thick, gray cardboard. Fasten ribbons at the upper end to hang the holder up by, and at the back fasten a dozen or more pieces of tissue paper, cut the same size as the other part, and "nicked" around the edge to make them look pretty.

CUSHIONS.—The variety of cushion designs is legion. Yet cushions, no matter how plain, always form most acceptable gifts. . . . Very pretty ones are now made of hollands, brown linen, or canvas cloth, embroidered in pretty designs. A very inexpensive, yet pretty and serviceable one is made of checked "shirting," blue and white or red and white, in which each

colored check is floss. A very pretty quite so useful spots at wide intervals with yellow embroidery cover as this is soils easily, and be washed.

PINCUSHION satisfactory than however, which circles of pasteboard stretched a piece design. Fasten ribbon around it are joined. Adorn by. Now, all headed pins, blue color which makes ribbons, veils or

A SPOOLBOARD. Bind it. Fill it with cotton together so that it and laced together.

A FLORAL CUSHION. pots, or in half small brass chains do very well. your friend, and mas, she will watching it bud.

A HANDY CUSHION. narrow ribbon, and them together several other pair of scissors, emery bag. The by the united pair.

Many other there space to say that, among aprons (either cloth medicine cloth pockets and square of oil-cloth bath-room or useful and sens appreciated, that may be used less.

Who has not Venice, how the the dainty Desdemond fend himself from her heart by so only sorcery he the fair maiden becoming his w attention of fancy that the ent manner.

In his defence

"Her father lo Still question From year to That I have I ran it thro To the very These Would Desden And often di My story a world of She lov'd me And I lov'd This is the c

The painter, his picture, p

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It's getting clo in the air That seems to there, And sweet the dreams of re Ring, bells, y your best!

It's getting clo and joy! And, oh, to b watchful boy With the stock to fill! But we still th a memory s

Look out f Room," which The Home Dep This corner a scription p