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Tale of a Fish Rod

A short distance from the river in a grove of towering trees that rang all summer with the music of birds and the gurgling of the brook as it dashed and swirled over and round the rocks, was the home of the old Professor, John Forrest. Carefully guarded by the hills in which it nestled, it looked out upon a pleasant valley, over waving fields of grain and across the gleaming river to the sheltering hills of blue.

John Forrest was a widower and lived in the old home with his daughter Anne, at peace with all the world and content to live in undisturbed companionship of his beloved books and rod. Ill health had driven him from the city, and he managed to support himself and daughter fairly well with his writing. The neighbors were very fond of the old man, and never failed to greet him with their broadest smile, for the professor was fond of chaffing, and had the cheeriest way about him, especially if you could meet him coming along the road without hat or coat, carrying his bait-can and rod in one hand and an ample green sunshade in the other.

Anna was tall, with a graceful carriage and a pleasant face that spoke a whole-hearted, lovely girl. Of course, all were her friends; for where was there one in that valley who could not tell of some deed of kindness done when they were most in need of it? And as certainly there were many of the young men who loved sweet Anna Forrest and would have told her so, were it not that something—they knew not what—caused them to be silent. But Gerald Willis loved her with all the strength of his young manhood, and as he came up the long hedge-bordered walk he intended to tell her so.

"Well, Gerald," said the old man, "where have you been these fine days? Don't you know that this low water is just the time to catch bass? I took a six-pounder only this morning, and I tell you he made a fight of it. Strangest thing, too, it was one I lost last summer. Fact, he added, in answer to a quizzical look on the face of Willis. "Had my hook leader and a piece of line in his jaw when I caught him. Didn't it, Anna? I'll go and get it, where did you say it was, dear?"

"It's hanging on the rafters in the well-house, father."

"Good. Now, young man, I'll show you something worth seeing."

As her father rose and went through the doorway, Anna turned and addressed Willis, who had seated himself on the step and leaned back against one of the pillars.

"What did you think of the concert last night?" she asked.

"Think of it," he replied, "it was grand. I shall never forget that 'tollist as he played Thome's 'Simple Aven.' So sweet and tender. It was like a beautiful promise of peace. I closed my eyes, and across my mind there stole a vision of evening, of the first twinkling of the stars, of a soft wind stirring from the river, and whispering to me of serenity and calm and quiet, and of a sweet presence that would ever be with me through the darkest hours of life, lighting them up with the simple thought that she was there."

"How beautiful! I declare, Gerald, I never knew that such things ever came to your mind. I am glad you have told me this, for do you know, that alo affected me strangely, too, though what I felt I could never have expressed as you have done. Tell me more. What other did you like?"

"I don't know. I didn't hear any other after that, for I found myself staring at the dearest girl alive and wishing that my dream were true."

Gerald for the first time looked up and met her eyes with such a world of love burning in them, that Anna paused in her question, and her eyelids dropped as the warm color rushed into her face.

"Anna, dearest, can I, may I hope that you love me? All these years I have loved you and I must speak. I love you! I love you! Tell me that you love me."

He caught her in his arms and rained kisses on her willing lips.

"Yes, I do love you, but I am so afraid I shall never be what you would wish me."

"Here's that bass! Six po—well, great Scott! What's the matter with you two?"

The professor came to a pause in the doorway, holding up the fish, and glanced from Anna to Gerald and back again, a look of astonished inquiry on his good-natured face.

"What's the matter, Gerald, lost something? Perhaps that's it on your watch-chain."

Willis had been running his hands through every pocket in his clothes, endeavoring to appear unconcerned.

He looked down and saw Anna's handkerchief dangling from his chain.

"Sit down, Anna. You don't look comfortable," added the professor with a grin.

Then he stretched out his hand and a kindly light came into his eyes as he said:

"God bless you both. I knew that sooner or later it must come. There is only one thing I want you both to do—stay with me. I am an old man now, and I can see the years stretching behind me like milestones on my road, but I can see far ahead, and I should be lonely without you."

Anna rested her head on her father's breast and sobbed. Willis grasped his hand and said, "We shall never leave you." And so it came about that Gerald Willis was going to marry the professor's daughter.

A few evenings after this Gerald came running up to Anna, as she sat with her father on the veranda that almost surrounded the house. He held a paper in his hand, which he waved to her as he called out: "Oh, dearest, you can't imagine what fine luck has befallen me! Uncle Henry has given me the deed of the old home and a half interest in the mill. Isn't he a brick?"

"What do you mean, Gerald? that your Uncle Henry has given you the old home?"

"Just that! See! here's the deed," and he spread it out on his knee and read it over to them. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "I am not going to town to have this stamped until next week, and I certainly don't want to carry it about with me, so I am going to hide it in the dining-room, and if you can find it before next week I shall make it over to you." And he passed into the house to carry out his scheme, coming out in a few minutes with a very satisfied expression, on his face. "There, if you can find it, remember, I shall have it made out to you as soon as we are married."

Business at the mill, was rather heavier than usual, and they did not see much of Gerald during the next three or four days, so one morning as the Professor was preparing to go fishing he was surprised when Anna came round the house and said: "I hope Gerald won't want to go off and leave me for the sake of some old fish. Do you think he will?"

"Well, I should think he would. I haven't much respect for a fisherman who deserts his early love like that."

"Is there really so much fascination in it as you say, father?"

"Yes, and recreation, too, my girl. Good, wholesome recreation that brushes the cobwebs off the brain and puts you in tune with Nature. Take my advice, daughter. If ever your husband wants to go a-fishing, you just let him go. Because you have never gone, of course you cannot appreciate what we anglers feel, but don't make the mistake of thinking that we do not find a peculiar enjoyment in it."

The professor finished counting out the small fish into his bait-can.

"Father, would you mind very much if I went fishing with you to-day?"

"I shall be very glad to take you with me, dear, but what are you going to do for a rod? I have plenty of extra tackle, but no rod."

"I'll take Gerald's rod. It's hanging here just as I had found the rod, and here it is," he said, as he drew it out from underneath the veranda.

"No, that wouldn't do at all. I would not think of borrowing a man's rod. That is one of the things he will neither borrow nor lend."

"But, father, I should not injure it, and I know that Gerald would not mind it in the least. He'd be glad that I took it. There now, that's a good Dad. Arrange it for me, and I shall be ready to go in a few moments."

The Professor could never hold out against his daughter, but this time he stood for a long time considering. Suddenly his face broadened into a smile and he nodded gayly as he went into the house. After a short time he reappeared carrying the rod, and, seating himself at the foot of a tree, he was soon busy supplying it with reel and line and leader and hook. Presently he paused, and, catching a glimpse of a figure in the doorway, looked up in astonishment at his daughter, who was dressed in beautiful Indian silk, and a leghorn hat, crowned with feathers.

"Well, my dear, going to a party?" Anna pouted.

"Don't you know that you will ruin all those pretty clothes in a boat? Why," here the professor smiled; "some big black bass will catch sight of you and jump out of the water to you. Then what will become of the dress? Answer me that."

"I don't know, father, but I'll be very careful, and I don't want to go past the mill looking like a rag-tag."

"Oh, ho! That's it, is it? Well, come along, then; only I am afraid that on your return you will be climbing fences to come home the back way."

It was but a short distance to the river, and they were soon out on it and anchored some distance above the mill. The Professor baited Anna's hook, and she caught the first fish, her father directing her how to handle him until he was safe in the net. Anna enjoyed the sport keenly, especially when the Professor and she hooked two fish at the same time, and

the constant maneuvering to keep the lines from tangling added a zest that made her eyes sparkle. Suddenly she became conscious that the boat was moving, and, glancing over the stern, saw that they were almost in the rift. She was on the rowing seat, and, laying her rod down, took up the oars, to pull the boat out of danger. Just then the fish on her line gave a vicious tug, and to her dismay she saw the rod sliding over the side. She dropped the oars in trying to save the rod, and the Professor looked over his shoulder in time to see what was happening just as the boat lurched and slid over the falls. By some providential chance the boat did not upset, although the Professor did, but Anna's eyes filled with tears as they worked the boat ashore and she thought of the deep disappointment Gerald would feel at losing his rod. But there he was now, waiting for them.

As the boat touched the bank he said:

"I've been up to the house for you, and they told me I should find you here. Uncle Henry is dead."

"Dead?" they both exclaimed.

"Yes," he died suddenly, about an hour ago from heart failure." Anna took his hand and pressed it as they walked in silence to the house.

After the funeral it was found that Henry Willis had left no will, and so his property and money would naturally go to his own son, a dissolute fellow whose escapades had made him the scapegrace of the village.

Nothing had been heard of him for years, but on the day of the funeral he made his appearance, and with a most important air announced himself as the property owner of the village.

It was while talking it over with Anna that Gerald said in conclusion: "It was a good thing that Uncle Henry gave me this piece just as he did, for I fear that his son would have made it too unpleasant for us to remain here. Not knowing of my proprietorship in the mill, he has already said that I might look for my walking papers as soon as he came in control. By the way, Anna, did you ever find that deed? Time's up, you know. I am going to town in the morning."

"No, I didn't find it, Gerald, but I searched all over the room for it. Wherever did you put it?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No, I can't guess. Now, don't tease me any more, but tell me where it is."

"Well, if you can't guess, I'll tell you. It is in the very last place you would look for it—the butt of my fishing rod."

"Your rod. Oh, Gerald, your rod! I—I lost it?"

"Lost it! Why, how?—what?—I don't understand, dear." Anna told the story of the fishing trip, meanwhile, a blank expression had stolen over Willis' face and Anna broke down and cried. But the Professor came to the rescue.

"There, there, child, I meant to tell you that I had found the rod, and here it is," he said, as he drew it out from underneath the veranda.

Some time after, the Professor was reading, when his daughter suddenly looked up from her sewing. "Father, how did you ever find that rod again? I don't remember that you went to the river at all after the day I lost it."

The Professor was safe behind his paper, and so ignored her question, but when she repeated it he answered, rather apologetically.

"Well—ah—the fact is that the rod you took with you, was not Gerald's but an old one of mine."

MILKMEY, DON'T READ THIS.

When Thomas drove up to deliver the usual quart of milk the gentleman of the house kindly inquired, "Thomas, how many quarts of milk do you deliver?"

"Ninety-one, sir."

"And how many cows have you?"

"Nine, sir."

The gentleman made some remarks about an early summer and the state of the roads, and then asked, "Thomas, how much milk per day do your cows average?"

"Seven quarts, sir."

"Ah, um! said the gentleman, as he moved off."

Thomas looked after him, scratched his head, and all at once grew pale as he pulled out a lead pencil and began to figure on the wagon cover. Nine cows is nine, and I set down seven quarts under the cows and multiply; that's sixty-three quarts of milk. I told him I sold ninety-one quarts of milk per day, sixty-three from ninety-one leaves twenty-eight, and none to carry. Now, where do I get the rest of the milk? I'll be hanged if I haven't given myself away to one of my best customers by leaving a big cavity in these figures to be filled with water.

HEARING UNDER SNOW.

People buried in an avalanche hear distinctly every word uttered by those who are seeking them, while the buried ones' most strenuous shouts fail to penetrate even a few feet of snow.

HOUSEHOLD.

CURRENTS AND RASPBERRIES.

A most delicious jelly can be made of currants and red raspberries. Choose a sunny day to make all jellies; do not make more than two or three quarts at once. Gather the currants before they are fully ripe, remove all leaves, dry and withered stems and imperfect fruit. Cook slightly without stemming and squeeze through two thicknesses of cheesecloth. Crush the raspberries, heat and strain. Measure half as much currant juice as there is of raspberry; mix, and for every teacupful heat in oven a teacupful of granulated sugar, stirring often. Boil the juice twenty minutes, skimming as necessary. Add the sugar piping hot; stir with a silver tablespoon as it dissolves. When it boils up once, remove from the fire, place a tablespoon in each jelly glass or set in several thicknesses of wet cloth, and fill to the brim, as jelly shrinks considerably in cooling.

Jam.—Stem the currants, crush and add a teacupful and a half of sugar to each pound, let simmer until soft, then set aside until the next day, or for twelve hours. Crush black raspberries, heat, adding a very little water, rub through a sieve to remove the seeds. Use one-third raspberry juice and two-thirds currants, with two-thirds teacupful of sugar to every teacupful of the mixed fruit. Boil slowly half an hour, or until when a little dropped on a plate will not spread, and looks shiny.

Cherry Tapioca.—Wash quickly a teacupful of tapioca, cover with cold water and let stand over night. Add a pint of boiling water and simmer until the tapioca looks clear. Sweeten to taste, add a pint of stoned cherries, and when cold serve with a spoonful of whipped cream in each dish.

Shirt-waist of white linen trimmed with clusters of tucks and bands of insertion. Shirt-waist sleeves with narrow linen cuffs. Material required, linen, 36 inches wide, 21-2 yards.

BARONESS BURDETTE-COUTTS.

The Baroness Burdett-Coutts has just celebrated her 80th birthday, and is in excellent health and spirits. She is forty years older than her husband, who, it will be recalled, though born in New Bedford, of American parents, has been, since his alliance with the wealthiest woman in Great Britain an Englishman. He might have been an Italian or a Russian, but then he wouldn't have \$200,000 a year for pocket money. The baroness has already given over \$5,000,000 in charity, and has built more churches than any other of the queen's subjects. Mr. Carnegie's aid is library giving, Mr. Rockefeller's is college endowment, while the Baroness Burdett-Coutts is churches for the heathen world.

A LUCKY CAT.

Three years ago Paris lost a famous cat, named Bis, enjoying an income of 10,000 francs left to him by his mistress, Mme. Bellevue. By French law she could not leave the money directly to Bis, so she hit upon the plan of leaving the 10,000 to the schools of her district, on the condition that Bis should be taken care of and allowed to live in peace and comfort. Accordingly Bis was placed in charge of a concierge between whom and the school, a contract was drawn up to the effect that a concierge was to receive 55 francs every three months, in return for which the concierge was to take care of Bis, and buy him meat and milk daily. Bis died, and the schools got the money.

THE JAPS' HOT BATH.

Among Japanese a daily hot bath is the rule. When people are too poor to have a bath in their own houses they patronize the public baths.

WHEN CHERRIES ARE RIPE.

A delicious cherry cake is made by putting stale bread into a pint and

REMARKABLE CREATURES.

They Are a Combination of Eel, Reptile and Mammal.

There are many quadruped which lay eggs. This is commonly the case with the cold-blooded quadrupeds, such as the frog, the crocodile, the lizard and the turtle. None of the warm-blooded varieties can be strictly said to lay eggs, but among the lowest forms of this group, there are some which produce eggs, and hatch them inside their bodies. The most remarkable of these creatures is the duck-mole, a native of Australia, a curious combination of bird, reptile and mammal. It has the bill of a duck, and the parts of the body which are concerned with reproduction, are strikingly bird-like. It is, however, classed with warm-blooded quadrupeds, since its young are born alive, the body is covered with hair, and it has the habits and general structure of a four-footed animal. This Platypus as it is also called, frequents water holes in the less settled parts of Australia, where it feeds upon insects, and forms its home in burrows under the banks. The young, hatched from its eggs before birth, are born blind and bare of either fur or feather, whilst—unlike anything similarly brought forth—they are suckled by the mother. When specimens were first brought to England they were looked upon as frauds, made up from different skins to puzzle the public.

ARCTIC DELICACIES.

This is the way an Eskimo lady sits at the head of her table and dispenses hospitality, and these are the delicate items in her bill of fare. They were tested at first hand by W. H. Gilder when, in crossing Siberia at the north, he had to accept native customs with what grace he might.

No matter how early you may awaken in the morning, you will always find the mistress of the house already up; that is, her position has changed from reclining to sitting. But as soon as she observes that you are awake, she hands you a small piece of meat to steady your nerves until breakfast time.

Then she goes into the next apartment, which is merely an enclosure for keeping the dogs away from the stores, and after fifteen minutes of pounding and chopping, returns with the breakfast.

A large, flat wooden tray is placed on the floor, and the landlady takes her position at one end, in the attitude elegantly described as squatting. The family and their guests gather around the board on either side, lying flat on their stomachs with their head toward the breakfast and their feet out.

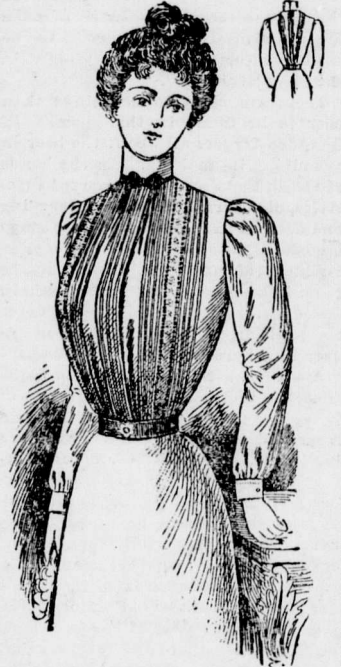
The first course is some frozen weeds, mixed with seal oil and eaten with small portions of fresh blubber, which the lady of the house cuts with a large chopping knife.

The next course is walrus meat. This is also cut up by the presiding lady, and is served with no staining hand. At this portion of the meal, the one who can swallow the largest piece without chewing has the advantage, and the only way to get even with him is to keep one piece in your mouth and two in your hand.

After this joint has been thoroughly discussed, there comes a large piece of walrus hide, which has a small portion of blubber attached to it, and the hair still on the outside. It is about an inch thick and very tough, so that it is impossible to affect it by chewing. It is therefore cut into very small pieces by the hostess, and finishes the meal. Really it is the most palatable dish of all.

WHERE SUCCESS LIES.

So far as a profession for women is concerned, we come back at last to the fact that her success has been greatest along eternally feminine lines. No girl can be taught a better trade than housekeeping or sewing. Every year the price of plain sewing is higher, and dressmaking climbs up into the clouds. The world is hungry three times a day, 365 days in the year, and has to be fed. The whole human race is on a still hunt for a good cook and a good place to board. These professions, carried on intelligently, are never overcrowded. "Oh," but you say, "look at the poor sewing women crying for work! Look at the boarding-housekeepers who fail!" True, but how did they do the work? Didn't they have to take your frock back time after time to have it fixed? Didn't it rip somewhere the first time you put it on? Was it done when promised? Was there ever anything fit to eat on the table of the boarding-house keeper who failed? Was her house as neat as a new pin? Incompetent, incompetent! No wonder they failed. That was the cause of their downfall. The woman who takes pains to be particular, who is honest and conscientious in her work, succeeds. When you find a woman who is reliable, who gives you the worth of your money in her wares, no matter what they be, you will find she has more customers than she can provide for.



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