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THE PORTALS OF THE HERE-AFTER.

I sat by the wayside watching
The motley moving throng,
As with eager and hurried movement,
They pressed their way along.

Unlike were their thoughts as their faces
But each with some intent
Close followed the one just before him,
On his own purpose bent.

Away, far away in the distance,
The long procession passed,
Through an ancient and time worn porch,
Where ended his journey at last.

With curious, questioning motive,
I walked toward the gateway old,
To learn of these traveller's future,
If aught of it there was told.

Then close by the wide, wide entrance,
I watched as each went through,
But whither so quickly they vanished,
No watcher ever knew.

The gates of the great hereafter
Stand open evermore,
But no one may see beyond them
Till he reaches the other shore.

LONNY.

I had a habit when visiting Aunt Hitty of scrutinizing the generous collection of photographs to be found on the claw-footed mahogany in the parlor, and the ambrotypes laid on one side in systematic piles. Many of the dear old lady's relatives, even to remote connections, were represented there, for she had the old-fashioned interest in kith and kin, and could detail accurately the branchings of the family tree.

The ambrotypes were curious mementoes of former generations, more interesting in their faded impressions sometimes than the photographs which gradually marked successive stages of advancement in the art, from the small, pale card, from which an expressionless face stared like a lump of putty, to the life-like, beautifully-finished work of Fredericks or Sarony.

There were all sorts of faces in Aunt Hitty's collection; some were pretty, some vixenish, some stolid, some silly. In fact the majority were uninteresting; so much so that you felt perfectly satisfied to know they dwelt somewhere in the wide world remote from your individual orbit. The exceptions were that you chanced on a face of marked power,

or good looks, or a mystery or sadness of expression that challenged your gaze and provoked your curiosity to know more of them than the sun had limned for you.

Such a face, not handsome, but manly and interesting, I happened on that chill December afternoon, as I sat with Aunt Hitty in the low-ceiled, cozy parlor.

It was a bleak day without. The sky was of a steel-blue, with a few rose-tinted clouds lying low along the eastern horizon, the wind soured drearily, and along the fences and the corners lay ragged, uneven patches of snow, while elsewhere brown weeds and sad ghosts of golden-rod swayed before every gust.

The pines before the house held up green, sturdy arms, but the other trees stretched forth only bare branches, with here and there a few shrivelled, rustling leaves still clinging with their dead but tenacious hold. The sun shone brightly, but it was a chilly shine, that left the pools icy and the fields wan. One turned gladly to the inside cheer, the Franklyn with its cheerful glow, the warm coziness in the room.

Aunt Hitty, rosy, genial, comfortable in her dark merino, looked up at me from her low rocker.

"Seems to me you ought to hev them pictures by heart, dear. You do beat all to look 'em over. It just seems you take a comfort doin' it!"

She was knitting, this dear old Dorcas was, some woolen stockings for a family in the neighborhood who had had, as she expressed it, a real hand-running streak of bad luck. The mother, the most efficient of the household, had had the malaria for months; the barn, with the season's crops, wagons, sleigh and one of the horses, had burned to the ground, and no insurance; and the old grandmother had had a "shock o' num palsy."

The children, of whom there was the poor man's quiver full, needed badly enough some one to look after their comfort, and this Aunt Hitty, bless her! was doing to the best of her ability. She had taken in for a while one of the patient, tow-headed urchins, who at present, overpowered by his dinner, or the heat, or both combined, lay asleep on the rug, and she was doing her utmost to finish this particular pair of

stockings for his thin, shapeless little legs.

Her needles clicked as she narrowed down to the heel; she bent kindly on me her placid eyes. I held forth to her the face I had been studying. The face a forlorn woman would turn to in a crowd, or a little child approach with confidence. The forehead was broad and well-shaped, the eyes large, candid and well apart, the nose large and by no means classic, the mouth wide but pleasing, the chin firm and square and with a well-defined dimple.

"I like him, Aunt Hitty. He is good-looking for a homely man. There is something of a sad expression there, though. Now I should say he had a story, and perhaps you might tell it."

"That's Lonny," said she, "Brother Jacob's only child. And as for his story, dear child, if it would do any good I'd tell it for the world to hear."

The shining needles flew in and out, the gray cat basked in the warmth, the rosy boy breathed softly beside her, the shadows lengthened and the early dusk drew on apace as I listened to Lonny's story. Aunt Hitty showed me, in a few incisive words, Brother Jacob and his home. I saw him plainly, a reticent man, hard-featured, ignorant, dogmatic, possessed with the greed of gain; and Aunt Elmiry, his wife, slow of speech, shallow of thought, content to do her household work and help Jacob save.

"Lonny was their only child," said Aunt Hetty. "Miry gave him the name of Leonidas; it was her father's, and though Jacob said it was a heathenish name, he lowed her to hev her way about it. He was a nice boy as boys go; restless and noisy, like all healthy boys I've seen, but lovin' and kindhearted."

"Jacob never spoiled him pettin' him. I used to think he was too stern with the little chap, never took no interest in his little plans. It was 'do this an' do that,' and no words wasted. Lonny seemed to fear him more than he loved him. As for Miry, she'd sit up all night an' nurse an' cry over him if he had the croup, an' the next day slap him well if he tracked mud in over her clean floor. We saw a good deal of the child. He was just our Ted's age, an' he used to come by to school, a

freckled, chunky little fellow, carryin' his dinner-pail; an' Ted would be waitin' under the choke pear tree that used to stand down there in the hollow, an' the way those boys would laugh an' call to each other made the air ring!

"He really liked to be here more than at home, but that was nat'ral, for we had children, an' Simon was always kind o' like a big brother to his boys; always takin' an interest in all their matters, teachin' 'em to shoot an' fish an' hunt, an' never failin' to let 'em hev their play-spells after their work was well done. 'For all work an' no play makes Jack a dull boy,' says he; 'an' vice versy.' We never made no difference between Lonny an' our own. When I made them figger doughnuts, I made his share just the same; an' when Simon made 'em each a sled for coastin' Lonny's was there too."

"So you might say the boy grew up near to us. He was no great at his books, but he had a head for makin' an' contrivin' things. He was handy with tools, an' 'twas easy seen that was to be his callin'. When he was fourteen, Jacob took him to Medford to serve Si Slocum, the carpenter and boss-builder as 'prentice; an' Lonny was willin' as could be to go. He wa'n't one like so many are now days, to slip into a trade without knowin' it. He was willin' to take pains to be a thorough workman. He talked it over to me, all eager as he always was when he set his mind on anything. 'I want to learn to do good work, an' get good pay, Aunt Hitty,' says he. 'An' when I can go in business on my own hook, I'm goin'. An' I'll always do good, honest work. I hate tricks an' shams. I just mean to be a first-class mechanic. Don't talk to me about standin' behind a counter, an' sellin' tape an' ribbon an' groceries. I want to make things; something that'll show honest work.' So the boy ran on, as was his way when folks would listen, an' I always tried to find time to listen to the children's plans. Dear hearts! they always have such bright hopes!

"There was only one thing worried me 'bout the matter. There were other boys in Silas's shop that wa'n't the clean-hearted, God-fearin' lads onewould want their boys thrown in with; an' (Continued on Fourth page.)