

## A DISAPPOINTMENT

One time I fixed my work all up. There wa'n't no chores to do.  
Says I, I'll jes' enjoy a day of loafin' through an' through.  
I won't get up no picnics nor do any such fool thing.  
A-botherin' with the victuals an' a pushin' of the swing.  
I won't do any readin', 'cause a book your mind will test.  
An' when you're thinkin' thoughts, of course you can't be quite at rest.  
I'll have the time my dreamin' has so long it fondly prized,  
An' revel in the sweetness of ambition realized!  
So, with both hands in my pockets, I walked out an' viewed the sky;  
An' then sat down a-waitin' while the lazy hours went by.  
An' then I thought I'd lose all earthly cares in slumber's deep.  
An' that's the first time in my life I ever couldn't sleep.  
I grabbed an ax an' jumped right in fur fair a-choppin' wood.  
To ease my nerves, an' nothin' ever done me so much good.  
An' I've jes' about concluded, as I think it over anew,  
That there ain't much fun in loafin'—'ceptin' when there's work to do

## THE ROMANCE OF BETTY

By NINA K. SLATER

THE slumbersome sunshine lay in full, rich glory upon the quiet village of Eastman, enfolded the Hancy Farm, which marked its eastern limit. The rush of the passing river was subdued to a murmur, the birds had hushed their songs, the air was soft, and the distant measured stroke from the village-smith mingled harmoniously with the dreamy hum into which Nature had symphonized all sounds. Betty sat alone under the great maples, lost in thoughts and dreams. She heard again the words to which she had listened the evening before in the moonlight: "Darling, I will come for your answer to-morrow night."

Even in the early days of its master the Hancy Farm had been a snug possession, but under John Hancy's skillful management, it had increased in acres until its boundaries spread miles to the north, south to the river, and a goodly distance east and west. John had been a comely, well-educated, popular young man, who, in time, had married the village teacher, bought a quarter section of land from the government, and had early tasted the intoxicating wine of prosperity.

Easter being of a strictly economical turn of mind, John had, to the surprise of his old friends, rapidly developed into "the village miser." In his later life no coat was too ragged, no accommodations too poor, no life too meagre for his satisfaction. Occasional delicacies—doughnuts, cookies or tea-cakes—were divided into halves for his hirelings. The few cakes of maple sugar left over from a season dropped and soiled instead of being sent to a less fortunate neighbor. An application for aid in charity sent an unfeigned shiver through the wearied figure and a tremor of vague apprehension into the thin voice.

His daughter Betty had not been exempt from the grind of home life. Her privileges were few, and those few chosen for their inexpensiveness. School had been denied her because she might meet with some accident on the road, and the old school books in the attic could no longer be used. Only one summer's visit with cousins had broken the long monotony of her life.

It was of all this that Betty was thinking as she sat beneath the home maples with crisp locks of gray hair blowing softly across her face and a gentle, far-away expression in her blue eyes. She viewed the past as a panorama—her restricted girlhood, without school days, with but one party, few books, little girlish finery, no girl friends, and but one lover. She saw Jack's tall form again, stole away to walk with him under the shadowed beeches, heard his first words of love, and went again

through the scenes of her thwarted elopement. Betty now, gray-haired and fifty, knew that John's professed love had been financial diplomacy, but, after all, love had not lost its charm nor moonlight's their glamorous sheen.

She saw once more the plain casket that her mother's form carried from the door of the low-roofed, rambling farm house. She knelt again by her father's dying bed, and heard him weakly say, "Betty, you'll be rich. Don't spend it, Betty; don't spend it. I've saved it all for you."

"Oh, father," she answered wearily, "if you had saved less for me, and given me one little bit of girlhood!"

"But, Betty! Betty! you'll have thousands of dollars—thousands, I say."

"Yes, father," she replied. "I'll try to make it pay for happy school days and all the other pleasures that most girls have and I have missed."

"No," she thought, "it can never pay for all the longings, all the deprivations, all the humiliations I have known. The one summer's visit taught me how empty life was, and all this wealth cannot buy me a girlhood."

Last night she had thought love might supply the missing past and give to her life the something she had missed; but now the mystery and charm of the moonlight was gone, and the low, insistent voice sounding through her memory had a false ring. The shrewd brain that had so skillfully accumulated thousands had bequeathed to Betty some of its keenness, and she remembered and understood much that she had been fain to believe. She knew then that the past was not only missing but irretrievably lost.

"Ben is younger than I," she reflected. "He will not take me to socials or parties, or even to church, when I ask him. He doesn't mean it when he says, 'Darling, I want you all to myself.' He is ashamed of me! Oh, ashamed of me!—and true love knows no shame. It is my miserable money that he wants—the money father saved to make me happy. Oh, the curse it has been!"

That night Ben received his refusal—not fearfully, but with a kind of regret. That night, standing before her mirror, Betty shook out the long strand of gray hair to the light, looked long at the sad lace; then she blew out the light, and with a few tears and a choked sob prayed that God would change the heart that longed for the things of youth to a heart that ought to belong with colorless cheeks and whitening hair.

Summer came again, and the fields were yellow with harvest. The whirl of the reaper broke the stillness of the days, and the management of a well-ordered household helped to quiet the

heart that Betty had prayerfully struggled to discipline. It was after one of these busy, hard, harvest days that John, her competent manager, said earnestly, "Betty, you need somebody to look after this big farm and you, you're working too hard lately, and with no girl in the kitchen, and you tramping around after the turkeys and ducks, I've been considerably worried about you. Betty, don't you think you and I had better get married? I'll be good to you, Betty."

It was a very prosaic wooing. Not a word of love it was all so unlike anything Betty had read or dreamed. But John was broad-shouldered and honest, and Betty recognized the truth of his statements and the sincerity of his one declaration, so when he gently asked, "Can't you, Betty?" she answered calmly, "Yes, John, I will marry you."

Prosperity still reigns at Hancy Farm. The low-roofed white farm house nestles among the ancient maples, the sound of labor breaks the quiet of the summer days, and song, laughter, and merry, friendly voices the white silence of winter. John still looks after Betty and the farm, but his fair face of the young has lost its sadness and rounded into a serene, mellowed autumnal beauty. John still wades through the morning dew and even rain to look after the turkey. There are occasional summer trips to the coast and long winters down south. If Betty ever wonders whether life has compensated for the years of humiliation and lost youth; if she ever reaches out for the old ideals, or her soul ever grows heavy with longing, it is in the silence of her heart and the lonely watches of the night.

### Household Pests

Never use poisonous articles to banish household pests, such as roaches, ants, etc. Carbolic acid, ammonia, copperas and all such are dangerous where there are little children. You can effectively banish all such nuisances by using a strong solution of borax water. Wipe your pantry shelves with it; first having scrubbed them clean with soap suds, then wipe them dry with a strong borax solution, and when quite dry, spread the powdered borax over the shelves and cover with clean newspapers, and you will be rid of them entirely.

I flush my kitchen sink daily with a solution of it, as it purifies and disinfects. A good many housewives never use anything else, and some mix equal parts of camphor and borax to drive away ants. It is so cleanly and safe, that if you object to the habit of using it for household purposes, you will never go back to the poisonous remedies. It is not expensive and will not lose its strength if you fasten it tightly in a tin can.

### Bright and Early

A close-fisted farmer in Southern Iowa believes in burning the candle at both ends when it comes to hired men. He had one, but needed another one badly. After a two-weeks' search he ran across a very promising young fellow at the country seat looking for work and hired him immediately.

At a o'clock the next morning the farmer called the hired man. The old hand was out in a minute and started for the barn. About fifteen minutes later the new man came downstairs with a grumpy face and said, "Why, aren't you going to work for me?" asked the farmer in surprise.

"Naw," replied the man in disgust. "I'm going to hunt some place to stay all night."