

OLD CUSTOMS.

Old customs! Well, our children say  
We get along without them;  
But you and I, dear, in our day  
Had other thoughts about them.  
The dear old habits of the past—  
I cannot choose but love them,  
And sigh to think the world at last  
Has soared so far above them.

We had not, in the years gone by,  
The grace that art discovers;  
Our lives were calmer; you and I  
Were very simple lovers.  
And when, our daily duties o'er,  
We stayed beside the rushes,  
The only gems you ever wore  
Were bright and blooming blushes.

Our rustic way was slow, but yet  
Some good there was about it,  
And many ills we now regret  
Old habits would have routed.  
I know our children still can see  
The fifth commandment's beauty—  
May they obey, as we once did,  
From love and not from duty.

The world to-day is far too high  
In wisdom to confess them,  
But well we know, dear, you and I,  
For what we have to bless them.  
Though love was in the heart of each,  
I trembled to accost you;  
Had you required a polished speech,  
I think I would have lost you.

No doubt our minds are slow to gauge  
The ways we are not heeding;  
But here upon our memory's page  
Is very simple reading.  
It says the forms we still hold fast  
Were wise as well as pleasant—  
The good old customs of the past  
Have leavened all the present.

A YOUNG HERO'S DEVOTION.

Self-devotion for suffering strangers is always a proof of a noble impulse. But at first thought it seems like carrying this to a wild extreme, when the only son of a widowed mother persists in casting his safety and his life on the altar of humanity. The hero of this story was such a son, and an example of such sacrifice; and to know that his mother shared equally in the Christian surrender, and gave him up, as many a brave woman in warlike days has yielded her last for her country's sake, should answer all criticism of his deed.

He walked from his country home into one of the plague-stricken villages—from a place of safety deliberately into a place of

danger, a youth of nineteen, a mere boy, pale-faced and slender. It was a time when a great and universal affliction was bringing out alike the cowardice of the selfish and the nobleness of generous souls, and drawing the line sharply between them. The yellow-fever, that terrible southern scourge, was in the height of its violence, and in that Mississippi hamlet thirty out of every hundred were dying every day. The boy presented himself before one of the physicians, and offered his services as a nurse—and helpers were sadly needed then.

"Have you ever had the yellow-fever?" asked the doctor.

"No, sir."

"Have you ever seen a case of it? know anything about the disease?"

"No."

"Why, how can you do any good as a nurse here? It's only throwing your life away."

"You can tell me how, and I can do as you tell me."

The doctor was struck with his determination. He looked at the lad, pondering what to do. "You are a Mississippi boy—native to the climate?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you have exposed yourself, it's too late to send you back. Stay here and help, and when you come down with the fever I will take care of you."

The slender youth at once went to work under the doctor's direction. Hard and fearful work it was, but he did it well. He made an invaluable assistant. The doctor declared that he had never before seen such an instance of patient and tender fidelity. But his turn finally came. The boy-nurse accepted his warning, and lay down to die. He had been the means of saving many lives. He had come to do that, urged by his sense of holy duty. The thought that he had succeeded made him grateful, and gave him peace. His friend, the doctor hurried to his bedside. He found him lying with closed eyes and folded arms, praying, unconscious of any human person.

"Such a prayer," said the doctor, "I never listened to before."

His mother, the physician, and nurses, the suffering sick, all were remembered. For himself death had no alarm. He knew whom he had followed, and whom his soul trusted in. As gently and faithfully as if he had been his own son, the doctor tended that dear boy. At last the terrible disease gave way. The young nurse recovered, and lived to add to his devoted work.

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A FAITHFUL DOG.

The following instance of fidelity and sagacity in the dog was related by Dr. Pariset, who was President of the Paris Academy of Medicine some twenty years ago. A young man of Perpignan was arrested on a charge of conspiracy and taken to Paris. He had a dog, which, seeing its master carried off in this manner, knew that he was unhappy, and his looks showed sadness and grief. The dog followed the carriage in which his master was conveyed, but took care not to show himself to him. When they arrived in Paris, their carriage was driven to the prison of the Conciergerie. There the three travellers alighted, and the dog, not being able any longer to conceal himself, assuming an attitude of submission, of condolence, and of fear, came crouching to his master, who, surprised and affected, replied to his caresses by his own, and obtained leave from the governor of the prison for the poor animal to remain with him. Three months passed before the trial came on, and on the day it took place, the young man was followed to the hall of justice by his dog, which lay down under a bench,

where it remained during the trial. The young man was unanimously acquitted, and was most warmly congratulated by numerous friends who were present.

On leaving the court he inquired for his dog, but he was not to be found. From the joy which followed the acquittal, the dog concluded that his master was out of danger, and had nothing more to fear, and he immediately set out for Perpignan, travelling day and night. After a journey of over a hundred hours, he reached the city, and arrived at the master's house, where he barked loudly, and scraped violently at the door, and when it was opened by the surprised family, the dog rushed in, his eyes sparkling with delight, running from side to side, leaping and uttering cries of joy; the movements of his whole frame seemed to say, "Rejoicing be in your midst." In reality, two days afterwards a letter arrived, acquainting them with the happy result of the trial, and announcing the speedy return of him for whom they so long suffered the greatest anxiety. From Paris to Perpignan the distance is 600 English miles.

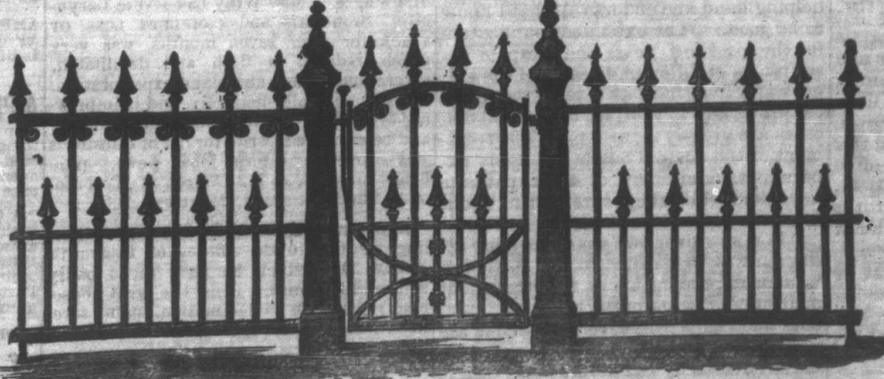
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