GRANDMOTHER'S BIRTHDAY.

"I say, grandma," piped a plaintive voice, as its owner entered, "It's pretty rough on a fellow, don't you think so, when he can't find his mother once a week? Where's she gone this time grandma?"

"You have been having one of your headaches at school, Willie, I can see that," and grandma looked at the frail little figure anxiously. "She's gone to her Woman's Club—no—it's the Working Girls' Aid."

"It makes a fellow almost wish he lived in a tenement or worked in a factory, so as his mother would come to see him sometimes," sighed the wistful voice, as Willie's hand went down in his pockets with an assumption of manliness comical to behold, and a frown puckered his face. "The girls are having some kind of a class in the parlor, and I mayn't go in, and if it wasn't for you I'd rather be an orphan in an asylum and be done with it."

And Willie withdrew his hands to sit down in the big armchair and nurse his knee gloweringly.

"I suppose it's because you're the oldest and I'm the youngest, and—and you know what they say, grandma—delicate. They think we can stay together, and kind of see to each other. What's in that box by you, grandma?"

"It's from your Aunt Eleanor, Willie, for my birthday. She says, however, that it will be impossible for her or for Hartman to be with me on that day."

And grandma took from the box a dainty cap such as Aunt Eleanor, the wife of grandmother's first born took especial pride in making for her, always claiming, so prettily, that the sweet old face, with its bright eyes, soft skin and fleecy white hair, was her inspiration. But despite the pretty gift, Willie saw that grandma, was grieved, and felt that he knew why.

Had he been asked the date of her birthday, he most probably would have said, "the last Thursday in November," for, coming on the 27th of that month, it was the family custom to merge the two, Thanksgiving and birthday, into one celebration.

But this year, rich Uncle Albert, grandmother's youngest son, had sent a check instead of coming, while Uncle Tom, the bachelor bookworm, had apparently forgotten all about it, and now, in addition, Aunt Eleanor, Uncle Hartmen and children were declining.

And so the old custom, a reunion of all her children and grandchildren on grandmother's birthday was beginning to be discarded, something that had never happened while grandfather lived and he and grandmother were in the old home. Not that grandmother was neglected in material comforts—it was not that.

Willie's head had ached all day, and now his heart ached. Had the boys been home from college, or even had his two sisters been present, he never would have done it, but alone with grandmother, he often laid aside his funny little grown-up airs.

"I think I will come and put my head on your lap," he said.

Sounds of music and laughter came from below, where Marion and Evelyn were entertaining the "Art Class."

Then some one began to sing.

Grandmother sat up straight in her chair, with her hand wandering softly over Willie's curls, and her bright eyes looking straight ahead listening.

"Oh, no—oh-h, no, no! Oh-h n-o o-o!" the voice declared over and over, in as many different keys, it seemed to grandmother, and then someone closed the door.

"I like your songs the best," said he. "Sing me one now, grandma."

Grandmother's eyes and thoughts came back to the little face on her knee.

"What shall I sing you, dearie?"

"I like soldier songs—'Oh, Give Me But My Arab Steed,' grandma."

"That was what your grandfather's friend the Governor, always asked for. Dear, dear! of all the men of note who frequented our house, the Governor alone is left, and he must be—yes, he is 90 years old now if a day—"

"But the song, grandma."

"Oh, give me but my Arab steed,
A shield and falchion bright,
And I will to the battle speed."

sang grandmother, with now and then a break in her dear old voice.

"Now, 'Fritz Eustace.'" begged Willie.

And the afternoon wore away.

In her younger days she had been taught to be prompt to meals; so now grandmother sat and waited, or ate alone. This evening she and Willie were half through supper when the rest of the family appeared, full of an announcement Mr. Bethel had made.

"And as long as I have to go," he explained to grandmother. "I have been trying to get Madeline to go with me; for she has never been South, and even a hurried trip would do her good."

"And I have about decided that I will," added Mrs. Bethel.

"But grandma's birthday," objected Willie.

Mrs. Bethel looked troubled. They had forgotten that.

Grandmother set her teacup down.

"The girls and Willie and I can have a quiet little celebration together," she said gently.

"Who will keep the house?" asked Evelyn.

"Suppose you let me try this time, Madeline," replied grandmother, a little timidly, perhaps.

Mrs. Bethel looked dubious. She seemed to have forgotten that grandma had been a most famous housekeeper in her day.

"I am not sure that you understand the ways of servants nowadays, mother," she began; "they are so different from what they used to be."

Grandma gave a quiet smile, knowing as she did that it was to her the servants all came for advice and counsel in their troubles.

But when Mrs. Bethel reflected how during a previous absence Evelyn had run deeply into debt, and how, on another occasion, the starving family had rebelled under absent-minded Marion's regime, she concluded it would be wise to accept grandmother's offer.

"And the birthday," said Willie, anxiously, the day after Mr. and Mrs. Bethel left, looking into grandma's eyes, which alone showed the hurt her heart felt, for Marion and Evelyn had just received invitations to join a country friend's Thanksgiving house-party, and seeing their eagerness, grandmother bade them go.

"You and I, Willie—" she began, then turned her face away to hide the tears that fell on her wrinkled face.

"It is not," she thought, "that I would have them come unwillingly—not that; but it is better to realize what I am now, that they do not care to be here, and then to remember what I was before the world left me behind. Is it that old people cannot learn to step aside gracefully, or that—" But she was too loyal to her children to finish the thought. "So old, so alone of my generation—nay, there are some few left! Can it be they are as lonely? Do they feel as left out of the life of to-day?" and grandmother mused on.

"I will do it," she said, rising suddenly and walking to the desk.

"Do what, grandma?" asked Willie.

"There is the Governor, and old Col. Haskins and Elihu Galleher still writing poetry at 79, they tell me. And there is Hattie Ann Vanderkirk and Rosanna Pringle and I might ask Mrs. Metepent, the old Judge's widow. And yes, there is Sallie Briscome. Who would have thought handsome, witty, courted Sallie would be spending her days in the Old Ladies' Home? Yes, yes, it will be like old times, indeed, to have Sallie—"

"Have her where, grandma?'

"You shall have a glimpse of the old-time life and manners, you shall see how grandmother was once regarded. They will all come—for the sake of old times, they will all come on my birthday. I will send for Celia; she has cooked many a supper for me in years gone by, and, I dare say, she is not too old to prepare one more. It shall be like the old times, the table shall groan—and I have two of Albert's checks untouched, and my own China and silver for the table. Hand me my pen, Willie, it has rolled under the chair. They will come, I know they will all come.

And come they did, every one!

Grandmother, in black silk, with the daintiest of her caps upon her snowy fluffs of hair, and a pink flush on her faded cheeks, received them with the dignity born of her old-fashioned ideas of propriety.

With her stateliest bow she welcomed the Judge's widow, whose handsome dress was covered with yards of priceless lace and whose hands sparkled with rings, while stout, comfortable Rosanna Pringle, her childhood playmate, now a great-grandmother, she met with outstretched hands.

Then with a kiss on either withered cheek, she greeted dear little Hetty Ann Vanderkirk, almost as timid now as at 18, when she kept an assembled company awaiting for dinner, standing meanwhile outside the drawing-room door, trembling, and almost in tears, afraid to enter until found there by the anxious hostess.

The Governor bowed low over grandmother's hand.

"A more charming hostess, if possible, madam, at 80 than at 20."

And when all the guests had arrived, the Colonel, a little tottery, to be sure, but none the less gallant, took Miss Sallie Briscome by the extreme tips of her fingers and led her to the piano, where, removing her mits, she began in a fine, quivering high soprano to sing to them as she had sung half a century before, "I Cannot dance To-night," "I'd be a Butterfly," and "Love's Young Dreams."

And being encored again and again, she gave them "Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt," and so laden with memories was Sweet Alice, that it left not a dry eye in the room.

Nor would the evening have been complete had not Elihu Galleher arisen, and addressing grandmother, delivered himself of a poem in honor of the occasion, which in turn brought in several lines of a sonnet that he had indited to her just 59 years before.

Then grandmother, on the Governor's arm, led the way to supper, and there being a gentleman short, Miss Sallie Briscome smilingly accepted the arm which Willie, in imitation of the Governor, offered her.

And the supper! The damask, the china, the silver, the quaint boat-shaped salt-cellars, the massive candelabra, all were grandmother's own, and with them each guest had just cause to be familiar.

The table groaned, as grandmother had predicted, beneath the results of Celia's old-time ideas of hospitality. And when the Governor arose, and bowing to grandmother, said, "Madam, to us gathered here there is but one toast, "The Past," every eye was dim, and every wrinkled hand trembled as it lifted its cup.

As the last guest departed, Willie looked up into grandmother's happy face and said:

"I like your kind best, grandma, for they don't treat a fellow as if he was always in the way, nor yet as if he wasn't there, which is worse."

And grandma, understanding, smiled.

Not the same day, nor even the same week, did they all see it, but eventually the newspaper containing the account of grandmother's "Centenarian Party" came to the hand and eye of each of her children and grandchildren.

How the paper got hold of it no one knew, and so great was her horror of a woman's name appearing in print, that grandmother was never told of it.

But, knowing Elihu Galleher's fondness for "rushing into print," he was given the credit, the more so that his own picture, as well as the Governor's, graced the column while creations of the artists, most probably, for they certainly were not portraits of the originals, appeared as grandmother, the Judge's widow and Miss Sallie Briscome.

"There was something very near to pathos," the article ended, "in the gathering of this group—the oldest 90, the youngest 79—all relics of the society of a past day and generation, in celebration of the 80th. birthday of one, who, though surrounded by a large family of children and grandchildren, turned to the friends of the past, and shared its glories with them."

Aunt Eleanor buried her face in the paper and cried:

"We could have gone, Hartman, with such a little inconvenience; and how it must have hurt her!"

Uncle Tom's eyes as well as Uncle Albert's grew misty as they read it, remembering the flimsiness of their excuses, and the gentleness of the old mother's replies.

In the midst of a gay house-party the paper was shown to Marion and Evelyn, and they felt keenly the rebuke in a companion's hasty exclamation:

"Your grandmother's 80th birthday! How could you bear to be away?"

In a Pullman parlor car, miles from home, Mrs. Bethel read it, then gazed at the passing landscape with eyes that were strangely blurred.—Exchange.

LOVE IS BEST.

Dusk had come in the drawing-room, but the lamps were not yet lighted, and the young women in picturesque hats clustered round the little tea table as closely as their huge sleeves and illimitable skirts allowed and sipped their Assam Pekoe between the bursts of confidence proper to the half hour. They had discussed the reigning topic, touched delicately on the last scandal, and were now busy with Jack Rodney's name and money. Alas! he had no money. A decision of the court had given his inheritance to another heir, and then he had gone into Wall street and had been caught on the wrong side of the market.

"I can't picture it," said Sally Littlejohn, balancing her little gold spoon. "What will become of him?" The spoiled darling! Why, he will have to go to work!"

"Work!" said Julia Montressor. "With those aristocratic hands! what sort of work?"

"Poor Jack!" said Arabella. "He wouldn't know himself out of his habits. How is he to go without his horses, his club, the opera, his London tailor?"

"I don't believe he will try to," said Felicia.

"Why, what will he do?"

"The only thing he can do—stop living."

"Oh, Bab! How horrid of you! Jack Rodney, the dear, splendid fellow! Has anyone seen him? I wonder what he is doing now," said Sally.

"Walking on his uppers, don't they call it?" said Bab.

"Such a shame! And he has lent and given away a fortune to other people. He never seemed to care about money."

"No, indeed; I suppose he has dropped a modest fortune in cards before this."

"Why, Bab; with the poor fellow in such a strait. He only does what all the men do."

"And he does a great deal they don't do," said Arabella. "Everyone else was letting Will de Luys reap what he sowed, but Jack made good all the misappropriation—isn't that the next term? And if it was Jack's yacht that went cruising up the Mediterranean and had Princes on board for guests, it was his steamer that took those children from Seven Alleys down the harbor every afternoon all the hot summer—"

"You always had a specific talent for turning a telescope on microscopic subjects," said Bab.

"No, thanks. I don't drink another drop of your tea, Felicia, though I declare it does put the spirit in you," said Julia. "Well, just one cup—lemon—yes," as Felicia's jewelled hand suspended the sugar. "What a perfectly lovely cup. Did you know that one of Dolly Van Ven's engagement cups was a tiny thing of gold, crusted with peridots?"

"No!"

"And who do you think gave it to her? Well, Jack, Rodney. And she cut him dead last week."

"She ought to," said Felicia, for doing such an utterly silly thing."

"I suppose he paid for it," said Bab.

"Where is Jack; does any one know?" said Sally.

"Going to Texas ranging. He has cleared up everything and starts at once, someone said. He'd like it, if it were play, poor fellow!"

"Oh, it is really getting dark," exclaimed Arabella, as the maid stole gently about the room, and great lamps flared up like moons dressed in the fashion. And she pulled on her ermine cape. "We must be going. Why, Felicia, how white you are! I should think you were ready to faint yourself."

"The sudden light," murmured Felicia. And then she saw herself in the glass, and passed her hand quickly over the shining olive eyes that glittered there for half a moment like points of steel.

Years afterward Felicia had only to make that motion with her hand across her eyes to call up the whole scene—the lovely, lofty room, with its old Gobelin hangings, the great mirrors framed in alabaster, the moony lamps, the high vases heaped with red roses, the lounges heaped with silken cushions, the Dresden and silver, the beautiful girls getting into their princely furs, talking scandal like dowagers, her sister Bab's face with the scarlet on both cheeks and her own, white and angry, in the glass, as the marble Diana behind her.

It was while the last dinner guests that night were still saying tender nothings to Bab, as she leaned against the mantel and the low firelight played on the satin sheen of her white gown till she looked as if taking life from a flame tinted jewel, that a slender shape slipped swiftly down the steps and passed along in the shadow of the houses like herself. The girl had never been in the street at night before without attendance; every sound affrighted her; she shrunk behind her veil from every passerby. As soon as she had turned the corner she brought into plainer sight the parcel she carried, that she might pass more readily as a maid. A half hours's rapid walk and she ran up some steps to make sure of a number, rang the door bell, said something explanatory to the man who answered it, passed in and followed him to the door up one flight of the broad, low stairway there.

The room was in confusion. A leather box and a portmanteau lay packed and strapped by the door. There were empty and discolored spaces on the walls where pictures had hung, brackets had held their busts and great cases and cabinets had stood. It was plain to see in its dismantled state that it had lately been a place of luxury.

A man sat there with his head bowed upon his arms as they lay along the table, in an attitude of utter dejection. He did not look up when the door opened and closed. But the girl crossed the room quickly, and standing behind him stopped with her arm laid across his shoulder. He lifted his head, looking straight before him. "I suppose it is a dream," he said, half to himself. "If you are a dream—"

"I am not a dream, Jack," she said, bending lower, her soft, cold cheek touching his. "I am Felicia."

There was a silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. For one moment there was silence and rapture here. And then the transfer men came for the luggage. "And this parcel, too," said Felicia.

"Felicia!" he exclaimed.

"This parcel," she repeated. "You know I can not go back after coming here," she said, when they were alone again. "I have burned my ships behind me."

"Do you mean it?" he exclaimed joyously. And then his tone fell. "I thought—oh, yes: certainly. I must take you home before my train leaves.

"You will take me home? My home is with you, Jack."

"You don't know what you say!" he answered her. "Oh, no; I cannot accept the sacrifice!" the eager gleam of his eyes belying his words.

"Jack," she murmured, "the sacrifice was in my coming here unasked."

"You know I loved you, you knew I loved you! And then this crash came—and there was nothing for me to say—to you, who have lain in the lilies and fed on the roses of life. I, whose part was the husks!"

"Yes, I knew it, or I could not have come," she replied as she moved away from him, going about the room, and pausing at the curtainless window place where the moonlight lay upon her, pale and impassioned.

"Don't make it so hard for me!" he exclaimed. "An hour ago it was the darkness of despair. I was going to bury myself in that ranch with its bunch of cattle, the one thing left me, as if it were a grave. Now I shall go out in that new life radiant with this happy knowledge and my hope. And even if I should never prosper enough to come for you," he said after a moment, taking a step towards her, "if you should weary in the long waiting and give some other man the love I have won—well, I could bear it, perhaps, remembering and living again in this night's joy."

"Some other man!" she exclaimed, unclasping his arms and looking for the hat and jacket that had been thrown aside. "I am going with you, Jack. If you can live summer and winter in a tent in Texas I can too. I have the fit clothes in that parcel I have my jewels there. They were my mother's and are mine and I have the right to take them, and their price will hinder my being a burden."

"A burden! Oh, Felicia, if I might, if I dared—"

"You will have to," said Felicia, calmly. "The Church of Blessing is around the corner, and the rector is my friend. Jack, you made me propose to you. I shouldn't think you would make me ask you to marry me!"

Standing there in the moonlight adjusting her disordered hair, she was too beautiful, too sweet and tender for mortal man to resist.

"The train leaves at midnight," he said. "There is but scant time—oh, my darling, if you should repent—If! Oh, you must, you will!"

"Never!" said Felicia. And then lip to lip and heart to heart, they lingered one moment before they went out together.

It was a year afterward that Felicia sat one night in the refulgent moonlight of the high prairie after a day of heat, tempered by the great Gulf breeze blowing over 300 miles of flowers.

"Are you sorry I came?" she said.

"Are you?"

"Do you know, it seems to me precisely as if we were living on an outskirt of the Holy Land with flocks and herds, and the fig and the pomegranate and the tender grape giving a good smell?" she said.

"Precisely. And the flocks and herds are prospering so that we shall have to take counsel of the prophet. Wasn't it Isaiah that said; 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation; spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes? Col. Upshur lived in a tent over yonder for a dozen years. But we may build our house next year, I fancy.

"With roses lying on the lower roof and a night-blooming cereus clambering across the gallery, like some of the houses in the old Spanish town there, I don't know but I like this better, though—the lovely freedom of it. Oh, we never lived before."

"Are you sure you never regret?" he asked.

"Regret? Well, I confess I should like to have heard Bab read out our marriage notice at breakfast—and Bab so bitter the day before for fear of it! But regret those days of littleness and idleness and gossip, the confining clothes and cramping life!"

And the large, white, lamp-lit room, sumptuous with mirrors and marble and carvings and gildings, with bronzes and paintings, with priceless rugs and lounges, with its voluptuous roses and great vases hung for a moment before her like the room you see painted through a window in the dark. She saw the young and lovely women, heard the sweet, high-bred voices, heard her stepmother's low laugh and Bab's shriller tone. And then she looked around her, at the sky flooded with splendor, at the vast softly dark slumbering land below, felt the preciousness of the love that was hers, and it seemed to her that a return to that other life would be like a butterfly creeping back into its chrysalis.

"I—I miss my father," she said, and her lip quivered.

But her husband's arm clasped her, and the pressure of his own lips quieted the sob.

"But even," she said presently, "if he never forgives us, or comes to see us, and if poor Bab should never come down here and learn what it is to live, I shall be sure, I shall be sure, my dear, that love is best!"—Harriet Prescott Spofford, in Courier-Journal.

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OF RATES ETC.

OFFICE OF SECY. TREASURER,
Newcastle, 9th. Dec. 13

COLLECTORS OF RATES and other Officers, required to make returns to the County Council, and all persons having claims against the County, are hereby requested to render the same duly sworn to, forthwith, to this office, preparatory to audit.

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SHERIFF'S SALE!

To be sold at Public Auction, in front of the Registry Office, in Newcastle, on Friday the 6 h day of March next between the hours of 12 noon and five o'clock p. m:

All the estate, share, right, title and interest of James O Fish of, in, to or out of all the following described pieces, or parcels of land situate lying and being in the Parish of Newcastle in the County of Northumberland, and Province of New Brunswick viz:

All that piece or parcel of land situate lying and being in the Town of Newcastle in the said County of Northumberland, and bounded southerly or in front by Water street, on the lower or easterly side by lands formerly owned and occupied by the late Moses M. Sargeant and by lands presently owned by Mrs. Mary Vondy. Northerly or in rear by Mary Street, and on the upper or westerly side by the Masonic Hall property.

Also, all that other piece of land situate in the said Town of Newcastle and County aforesaid, and bounded southerly or in front by Mitchell Street, on the lower or easterly side by lands formerly owned and occupied by the late John Williamson northerly or in rear by land occupied by Mrs. Golightly, and on the upper or westerly side by a lane, being the land and premises formerly occupied by John Watters.

Also—All that piece of land situate in the Parish of Newcastle, in the county aforesaid, bounded southerly or in front by the Great road, on the lower or easterly side by land formerly owned by the late John Nicholson, on the upper or westerly side by lands owned and occupied by James Nevin, and extending northerly or in rear to the full extent of the original Grant,—being the land known and distinguished as "The Fish farm" Which several pieces of land were conveyed to the said James O Fish by James Fish by deed dated the eleventh day of April A. D 1889.

Also, all other the lands tenements, hereditaments and premises of the said James O Fish, whatsoever and wheresoever situate in the said County of Northumberland.

The same having been seized by me under and by virtue of an Execution issued out of the Supreme Court, at the suit of William A. Hickson against the said James O. Fish.

JOHN SHERRFF,
Sheriff.

Sheriff's Office Newcastle this 26th day of November, A. D. 1895.

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