

Choice Literature.

ONE WOMAN'S REVOLT.

"No; I was not even looking for board," Miss Janet made haste to reply.

"What, then?"

"I really had not made up my mind. If it is not too much trouble I would like to see the Scribner Cottage."

"Certainly. We will go right up now."

The Scribner cottage was small, plain, unvarnished throughout. Up-stairs the partitions all ended in the gables, at a height of about six feet. The rooms were small, some of the number being mere closets, but the breezes that blew in were large, and out-of-doors it was roomy, very.

"If," said Miss Janet, "I should take this cottage and give one hundred and twenty-five dollars for it, do you think I could get boarders enough to pay the rent?"

"No trouble at all," said Mrs. Knapp. "They come down like flies, in August, and you must put the price of board up as they begin to thicken."

"Now," said Miss Janet, hesitatingly, "would you, if you had very little or nothing to begin with, be willing to take the risk?"

"If I was you I would," emphasized Mrs. Knapp.

"And if I come here will you kindly give me such advice and information as I may need?"

"Course I will, and be glad to, Miss Pierson."

"And do you think I should do Mrs. Scribner any injustice if I asked you to keep the cottage for me two or three days, even if I decided not to take it?"

"Not a bit of it. I think she would let you have it cheap, if she was to see you. I would, if 'twas mine."

"You are very kind to me, a stranger," observed Miss Janet, taking out a timetable to note the departure of the next train.

"Robin! Robin!" shouted Mrs. Knapp, to a man who was urging a horse through the sand, past the house.

"Where be you going, Robin?"

"Over to the Grove, Miss Knapp."

"Well! Here! You take this lady in, won't you, and leave her at the depot. She wants to go to New York."

"It will save you time, and a good long walk," observed Mrs. Knapp. "You will catch the first train if you go with him. Good-bye, now. I hope you will come. Direct to Mrs. Elizabeth Knapp, and I'll get it."

"I assure you I will come if I can," said Miss Janet, and, with utter good-will on both sides, and genuine gratitude on one side, Miss Janet climbed into Robin's milk-cart, and was driven to the railway station.

She was just in time to catch the first train up; she was just in time to catch the up train from New York that she desired to take, and at precisely seven o'clock her feet touched the platform of the station at Templeton.

"Janet Pierson! Where on earth have you been?" was the first question that greeted her. It was Margaret who spoke from the position where Katharine and herself were drawn up into line ready for attack.

"If you only knew how you have worried us to-day," said Katharine.

"If you only knew what a perfectly delicious time I have had to-day, and nobody can ever take it away from me. I shall remember it as long as I live," said Miss Janet, with an earnestness that her sisters could never understand.

After that, in silence, they began the homeward walk of two miles. They had passed quite beyond the line of side-walks before any one spoke.

"Tell us where you have been," determinedly said Margaret.

"I have been to see the ocean."

"The ocean!"

"Yes, Margaret. I have been to New York."

"New York!" cried Margaret and Katharine, with horror in tone and accent.

"Yes, and beyond. I have been to Ocean Grove. These feet have trodden the sands of the coast this very day."

"You don't mean it," said Katharine.

"How did you get there! Beg your way?" queried Margaret.

"Oh, the world has been so good to me one day in my life," said Miss Janet, oblivious of her sister's scorn. "I have been so happy!" and then, quite full of her subject, she went back to the walk of yesterday morning, and told it all; the chance finding of the torn leaves by the roadside; the coin story; Mr. Hine's help; the meeting with Elizabeth; that glorious walk by the sea; the invitation to dinner; the cottage-and-boarder suggestion, and, at the last, she said: "I have come home, girls, to talk the matter over with mother and you, and to think about it."

They were walking, forgetful of the May night dew, one on either side of her, the two sisters, who certainly always agreed on one subject, and that the visionary, impractical nature of Miss Janet. Here, at last, was the outcome of it, confronting them, and yet they had, in spite of every effort to the contrary, been exceedingly interested in the quick, crisp descriptions given of the events of the day.

"And you, Janet! you think of hiring a cottage and taking boarders!" laughed Margaret.

That opposition was just the thing Miss Janet had need of. "Yes, I do!" was all she said; but her mind was made up. She would sell every coin she had, her grandmother's silver spoons; she would sell her right in the farm, if necessary, to do it, now. Opposition was Miss Janet's strength.

The next day she took her soft, leathern purse and called upon Mr. Hine.

By the next mail a letter of acceptance was sent to Mrs. Elizabeth Knapp, and, the last week in May, Miss Janet set forth for her summer by the sea. Margaret knew she could never get on alone, but the farm must be taken care of, and Katharine's school was not over till near the end of June. She could not go, and it was out of the question to expose Mrs. Pierson to the risk of an experiment. Miss Janet went alone. Elizabeth was at the station this time to meet her. How lovely everything was at every step of the way to the Scribner cottage. Good Mrs. Knapp had opened it; had aired it; knew just how many blankets and sheets there were; just how many boarders the knives and forks and spoons would hold out for. In fact, Mrs. Knapp had, as she announced before

Miss Janet entered the cottage, "all but taken a boarder for her."

"Elizabeth can stay with you until you get a trifle wanted," said the good woman. "It is a good bit lonely down here after nightfall till the Moores and the Otises get here. To have not a living soul between you and the sea, sometimes makes one feel uncanny enough. There was a woman lived up here a piece, this side of the piney woods yonder—lived there all her life, and, if you'll believe me, she was so afraid of the ocean that you couldn't get her near it, and, after the railroad was built, she never had a bit of peace by night or by day, for fear the engine would run off the track and run into the house. Poor soul! and she the only woman living anywhere near here for years and years, till the Grove began to build up, and she atwixt the sea and railroad and afraid of both; but, Miss Pierson, let me tell you about the boarder. He came out here a-looking, the very day your first letter came down. I don't never take no boarders myself, but, somehow, all sorts come to me asking. Somebody sent him, and I told him this cottage was going to be took by a lady from Connecticut, and he spoke right up and said that would suit him first-rate. He was a Connecticut man. Then I up and told him your name; but he said it was a good many years since he had lived much there, and he didn't seem to know any Dr. Pierson, but he said he wanted to find a place for his sister. She was a widow, and sickly somewhat, but not bad enough to need any nurse, and he wanted to fetch her down from New York the first day he could. I praised you up as high as I knew how to, and I showed him the rooms and told him how much you would ask."

"Why!" interrupted Miss Janet, "how could you tell?"

"Oh! I know a deal better than you do, what you ought to ask, and, laws me! haven't I seen, in the last fifteen years, enough of 'em come down to know by this time what ones can pay and will pay, and what ones can pay and won't pay, and what ones would pay if they had any money. This was one of the ones who can and will, so I told him the biggest one, the front one, would be, for his sister, twenty dollars a week, and the next biggest side room, toward the sea, fifteen for him, and you was to let him know how soon you would take 'em, when you got here."

Had Mrs. Knapp said one hundred dollars a week the utter astonishment of Miss Janet could not have been exceeded. It took a long, long time to convince that lady that the sum was not an extortion.

"Why, think, child," said the good woman, "you pay about ten or twelve dollars a week for the rent, and then couldn't he go all 'round and find out for himself if that was too much. Why, go yourself, now, and see what you can get a small room for. He wasn't obliged to take it. I'm for seeing you straight through this thing, 'cause I kinder saw how things was the day you first come down."

The first week it rained all day and every day. It was cold, and the wind blew. The whole place seemed made up of cold mist and damp wind. The blue "unders" of the piazzas gathered moisture and sent it down in copious drops, the very beds seemed to ooze damp odours, and, as for the ocean, it became not a thing for wonder to Miss Janet, that the sole woman living on the coast had a wholesome awe of it, but that she could abide the winter fierceness of it at all.

At last the stormy weather went by and the radiant June weather and the new boarders came together. Miss Janet felt, the afternoon of the arrival, far more like rushing to hide behind the great bulkhead at the Infants' Home than going down to welcome the strangers. The responsibility of it seemed something positively awful. Would they like anything she had prepared for their tea? At the prices she had asked, ought she not to feed them, well—at least off from solid gold and silver?

She was suffering all the anticipatory horrors of the occasion, as for the third time that day she peeped into the water-pitchers to see if any dust had deposited there, when Elizabeth's feet clattered up the narrow stairway, and Elizabeth's voice said: "They're a-coming! There they be! and, my, what a load of trunks! Miss Pierson, they ought to go in the barn—the trunks, I mean."

A moment more, and the worst, the very worst that could come, had come—Miss Janet had taken boarders. They had been welcomed and shown to their rooms; but would they stay when they saw how simply she meant to live? It was impossible to get the trunks up the stairway; they had to be hoisted over the railing of the balcony and taken in through the storm doors. Robin helped to do that—John Robin. John Robin went about in the morning with a milk-cart; at mid-day and all odd hours of the day, with a baggage-wagon, conveying luggage or passengers, as the case might be, and he was always open to an engagement with his road-wagon and "pair" for any place between Long Branch and Spring Lake. John Robin was the most important man to the public in Ocean Park. He would, for a reasonable sum, build you a house, or put down for you a cucumber pump. Miss Janet had frequent occasion to test his alacrity and his common sense. With Mrs. Knapp, John Robin and Elizabeth on her side, she felt that success ought to alight on the banner of her endeavour. Her only rival for the affection of Elizabeth was the Salvation Army.

The next morning, very early, Miss Janet was in the little kitchen. Had she suddenly fallen heir to a kingdom her anxiety could not have been greater for the welfare of her subjects than it was concerning coffee, chops and omelets. Sounds, the very noise of fire-building, rattled so readily up the slight partitions to the rooms above, that she dropped the coal into the stove in a newspaper, and beat the eggs for cornbread out in the back porch, lest the sleepers be disturbed. Elizabeth laid the table on tip-toe, and whispered, hoarsely, in at the kitchen door to ask, "Was it time to ring the rising bell?" so utterly exhausted was the vivacious girl with the exercise of keeping still.

From the moment following that breakfast, Miss Janet's life seemed, in a certain, very busy and bustling way, taken out of her own hands. There was so much to be done, and no time to consider seriously the doing of it. Life was so new to her in its every hour, and every day seemed to float her into the new region of new thoughts and new lives that were full of vivid, throbbing interest.

Mrs. Lawrence was charmingly interesting, with a fascinating, vague unrest about her that kept one's curiosity constantly in action. At one moment her face wore the expression of infantile innocence, and her words denoted the frank ingenious heart of a child. The next time one met her she gave the impression of a world-worn, weary woman, who had met

disappointment, deep and intense, at every point on the way. And then, ere you had time to recover from the surprise of it, you would be gazing at, and listening to, one of the loveliest embodiments of happy success that the world holds.

Miss Janet was an intense lover of lovely women. Not a line of beauty in form, or trace of grace in character ever escaped her. Between the ocean and Mrs. Lawrence life was kept up to a point of unfaltering interest for the first two weeks, and then, something else came—six boarders. They were friends of Mrs. Lawrence and insisted on being admitted, even though two lads, sons of one of the ladies, were compelled to occupy a room in the unused barn. With eight boarders, and ninety-five dollars a week, Miss Janet felt that her time was fully occupied.

July came. With it the crowds began to grow on the board-walks; at the bathing-grounds; in the streets of Ocean Grove; and Wesley Lake blossomed with boats, freshly tinted and gorgeously fitted.

The great auditorium was filled; the Holiness Meetings begun. Sounds of song and cries of petition vibrated from tent to cottage; from cottage to temple; from temple to tabernacle; from tabernacle to auditorium, and from thence on Sunday afternoons to the vast assemblage that crowded the sea-sands, and prayed and sang with preying breaker and sounding surf, until the very steamships, throbbing down the ocean, beat back responsive guns. It was at that time that the gospel tent arrived on the Ocean Park side of Fletcher Lake; it was then that the raspberries came, red and luscious, brought every day by a young girl who wore "Salvation Army" brodered on her jersey; then that the pressure to take more boarders became more than Miss Janet could bear without positive suffering. Now that the fear of getting into debt was removed, she determined to have, let come what would, her own summer by the sea. Every evening, as soon as tea was over, she set forth for her walk along the sands, to Ocean Grove. Miss Janet never took kindly to the poor little boats that threaded the ferry to Jerusalem Way. The walk thence to the post-office and markets always made her think of the tiresome end of towns where she had lived in that life of, oh! so long ago. When she thought of the farm, two miles from Templeton; when she sat down to write the hurried, brief letter that went dutifully thither twice in the week—the letter that contained nothing of her real, true life, but simply told that she was well and getting on fairly well—a very strange sensation crept over her. She began to doubt whether she ever had been Janet Pierson, living there, or, in fact, anywhere, until now, in this real, vivid, intense life that had awakened the quick of her soul.

The market men sought to please Miss Janet. The fisherman brought to her their choicest "outside catch" of fish. The baker always selected the brownest, fairest-looking loaves to leave at the Scribner cottage, and the poor pied cow, tied all day and every day to the end of a long, cruel rope, her only shade from the fire of the sun the passing shadow of a friendly cloud, her only food the sharp, stiff, triangular sand-grass, learned to know and to greet the slight figure that came with every day to fetch her morsels of food. Yes, even the pied cow stretched her rope to the utmost to meet Miss Janet. It seemed to her that the very heavens were bent above her happy head in benediction.

(To be continued.)

DOES ANYONE LIVE A HUNDRED YEARS?

It will be remembered that Sir George Cornewall Lewis undertook to prove that nobody had ever lived to be a hundred years old. He contended that the reputed centenarians were persons whose history was obscure and whose births could not be verified. No one, he maintained, who had lived before the public was included in the number. Now, on the other hand, an English physician, Dr. George M. Humphrey, brings forward the results of an extensive and rigorous investigation, which has shown that the attainment of centenarianism is by no means impracticable, not less than seventy-four persons being enumerated who have unquestionably reached or exceeded the age of a hundred years. Nothing, for instance, could be better authenticated than the longevity of the famous French savant, Chevreul, who was more than a hundred and two years old when he died last year. In 1875, Sir Duncan Gibb recorded the case of a great-aunt of a Mr. Williams, who had sat at the head of her own table for a hundred Christmas days, having been married at the age of fifteen. We observe that Dr. Humphrey puts faith in the extraordinary age ascribed to Thomas Parr (one hundred and fifty-two years) on the ground that William Harvey, who performed the post-mortem examination, would have taken pains to ascertain the truth had he had cause to suspect that an imposition had been practised. In the case, too, of John Bayles, said to have been one hundred and thirty years old when he died in 1706, there is extant a medical description, with details, that satisfied the observers of the correctness of the reputed age. Outside of England there have been trustworthy examples of centenarianism not mentioned by Dr. Humphrey. When we bear in mind the fact that the bishops of the Greek Church are even more careful to register births than are the English parochial clergy, we must accept, as deserving of credence, the statement made to Sir Henry Halford, by Baron Brunow, the Russian Ambassador to the Court of St. James, that there is, on the borders of Siberia, a district where a year seldom passes in the course of which some person does not die at the age of one hundred and thirty. Then, again, from official accounts of deaths in the Russian Empire in 1839, it appears that there were 858 persons whose ages ranged from 100 to 105; 130 ranging from 115 to 120; and three from 150 to 156. At Dantzic, one was said to have lived to one hundred and eighty-four, and, in the next year, 1840, another died in Wallachia at the last mentioned age. In ancient times, also, there are official records of centenarianism, whose accuracy is not easy to impeach. Thus, when Vespasian made his census in A.D. 74, there were found to be, in the Roman Empire, fifty-