

# AN OLD LADY'S LOVE STORY.

I sat spinning at my little wheel, in the sun, for the autumn day was cold, when I heard some one whistling; and, looking up, there was young Squire Turner, with his arms folded on the gate, looking over. When he caught my eye he laughed, I blushed, and I arose and made him a courtesy. He was a handsome gentleman, the Squire, and the hand from which he pulled the glove shimmered in the sun with pearls and diamonds; and he was bonny to look at with his hair like spun gold in the October sunlight. When I courtesied he bowed, making his curls dance over his shoulders, and said he, "I've spoiled one pretty picture that I could have looked at all day, but I've made another as pretty, so I'll not grieve. May I come in?" "And welcome, sir," said I, and I set a chair for him, for he was grandfather's landlord; but for all that I felt uncomfortable, for I was not used to fine company. He talked away, paying me more compliments than I was used to, for grandmother, who brought me up, said, "Handsome is as handsome does," and "Beauty is but skin deep." Since I'm telling the story I'll tell the truth. I had done wrong about one thing. Neither of the old folks knew that I wore Evan Locke's ring in my bosom, or that we'd taken a vow to each other beside the Hawthorn that grew in the church lane. I never meant to deceive, but grannie was old and a sweet secret. Besides, money seems to outweigh all else when people have struggled all their lives through to turn a penny, and they knew Evan was a poor, struggling young surgeon. I thought I'd wait a while until I could sweeten the news with the fact that he'd begun to make his fortune. Grannie came in from the dairy five minutes after the Squire was gone, and heard he had been there. I didn't tell her of his fine speeches, but there was a keyhole to the door she came through, and I have a guess she heard them. That night we had something else to think of. Misfortunes had come upon grandfather; but I didn't foresee that, when the half year's rent should come due, not a penny to pay it would be found. All this time Evan Locke and I had been as fond as ever of each other, and he came as often as before to talk with grandpa on the winter nights; and still every little while our young landlord, Squire Turner, would drop in and sit in his lazy way, watching me knit or spin. Once or twice he was flushed with wine and over bold, for he tried to kiss me. But Squire or no, I boxed his ears for his pains, and no softer than I could help either. I could not help his coming, nor help seeing him when he came, and I did not deserve that Evan should be angry with me. But he was. Eh, so high and mighty, and spoke as though one like the Squire could mean no good by coming to so poor a place as the schoolmaster's. He made me angry, and I spoke up. "For that matter, the Squire would be glad to have me promise to marry him," said I. "He thinks more of me than—"

"May he say like him better?" "I don't say that," replied I. "But bad temper and jealousy scarce make me over fond of another. I pray I may never have a husband who will scold me." "For he had been scolding me. No other name for it." Well, Evan was wroth with me and I with him—not heart-deep, though, I thought—and I did not see him for more than a week. I was troubled much, though. I knew he would come round again, and mayhap ask my pardon. For before you are wed you can bring your lover to his senses. So I did not fret after Evan's absence, nor quite snub Squire Turner, who liked me more than ever. But one night grandfather came in and shutting the door, stood between grandmamma and me, looking at me, and so strangely that we both grew frightened. At last he spoke: "I've been to the Squire's," said he. "For the first time I had to tell him that I could not pay the rent when due." I opened my lips. Grandmamma's hand covered them. Grandpa drew me to him. "Thou'rt young, lass," said he, "and they are right who call thee pretty. Child—couldst like the Squire well enough to wed him?" "Eh?" cried grandmamma. "Sure, you're not wandering?" "Squire Turner asked me for this lass of ours to-night. Of all women in the world there is but one he loves as he should his wife, and that is our Agatha."

"I dreamt of golden rings and white roses on Christmas eve," cried grannie. "I knew the lass would be lucky." "But put my head on grandfather's shoulder and hid my face. The truth must out I knew." "Will have him and be a rich lady?" said grandpa. And when he had waited for an answer, I burst out with "No," and a sob together. "She's frightened," said grandmamma. "Nay, we must all wed once in our lives, my child." Then grandpa talked to me. He told me how poor they had grown, and how kind the Squire was, and I had but to marry him to make my grandparents free from debt and poverty their lives through. If I refused and vexed the Squire, heaven only knew what might happen. "She'll never ruin us," sobbed grandmamma. Ah! it was hard to bear—bitter hard; but now there was no help for it. I took the ring from my bosom and laid it on my palm, and told them it was Evan Locke's, and that I had pledged my troth to him. And grandmamma called me a deceitful wench, and grandfather looked as though his heart would break. Oh, I would have done anything for them—anything but give up my true love. That night I kissed his ring and prayed heaven that he might love me always. In the morning it was gone, ribbon and all, but found no sign of it. And I began to fear the loss of that dear ring was a sign that I would never marry Evan Locke. The days passed on and he never came near me. "Oh, it was cruel in him," I thought, "to hold such anger for a hasty word he had provoked, when I spoke it that he must know I loved him so." And grandmamma would scarcely look at me (I know why now), and grandpa sighed, and moaned, and talked of the work-house.

And I thought I should die of grief among them. One day grandpa said to me, "It seems that your sweetheart is not over-fond of you, nor over-anxious to see you." "Why not?" said I. "Where has he been this month back?" "Busy, doubtless," said I, with a smile, though I thought my heart would burst. "You're going with him, maybe." "Where?" said I. She went to the kitchen door and beckoned in a woman who sat there—Dame Coombs, who had come over with eggs. "I heard you rightly," she said. "You told me Evan Locke and his mother were making ready for a voyage." "They're going to Canada. My son, a carpenter—and a good one, though I say it—made the doctor a box for his things. The old lady dreads the new country, but she goes for the doctor's sake. There's money to be made there." "I told you so," said grandmamma. "I don't believe it," said I. "They've sold the house, and gone to Liverpool to take ship; and you may find the truth for yourself, if you choose to make trouble," said Dame Coombs. "I'm no chatterbox, to tell falsehoods about my neighbors." And still I would not believe it until I had walked across the moor and had seen the shutters fast closed and the door barred, and not a sign of life about the place. Then I gave up hope. I went home all pale and trembling, and sat down at grandmamma's knee. "It's true," said I. "And for the sake of so false a lad you'll see your grandfather ruined and break his heart, and leave me, that have nursed you from a babe, a widow." I looked at her as she sobbed, and I found strength to say: "Give me to whom you will then, since my own love does not want me." And then I crept up stairs and sat down on the bed, weak as though I had fainted. I would have thanked heaven for forgetfulness just then, but it wouldn't come. The next day Squire Turner was in the parlor as my accepted lover. How pleased he was, and how the color came back into grandfather's old face! And grannie grew so proud and kind, and all the house was aglow, and only I sad. But I couldn't forget Evan—Evan whom I had loved so—sailing away from me without a word. I suppose they all saw I looked sad. The Squire talked of my health, and would make me ride with him over the moors for strength. The old folk said nothing. They knew what ailed me; only our little Scotch maid seemed to think there was aught wrong. Once she said to me: "What ails ye miss? Your eye is dull and your cheek is pale, and your brawny grandlover canna make ye smile; ye are na that ill, either." "No, I am well enough," said I. "Gin ye'd tell me your all, I might tell ye a cure," she said. But there was no cure for me in this world, and I couldn't open my heart to simple Jennie. So the days rolled by, and I was close on my marriage eve, and Grannie and Dorothy Plume were busy with my wedding robes. I wished it were my shroud they were working at, instead. And one night the pain in my heart grew too great, and I went out among the purple heather on the moor, and there knelt down under the stars and prayed to be taken from the world; "for how can I live without Evan?" I said. I spoke the words aloud, and then started up in a fright, for there at my side was an elfish little figure, and I heard a cry that at first I scarce thought I heard. Yet it was but Squire Jennie, who had followed me. "Why do ye call for your true love now?" she said; "ye sent him frae ye for sake o' the young Squire." "How dare you follow and watch me?" But she caught my sleeve. "Dinna be vexed," she said. "Just hide a wee, and answer what I speak. It's for love of you, for I've seen ye waste like the snaw wreath in the sun sin the Squire wooed ye. Was it your will the lad that loved the ground ye trod on should have his ring again?" "That do you mean?" said I. "I'll speak gin I lose my place," said Jennie. "I rode with the mistress to young Doctor Locke's place past the moor, and what she said I know not, but it turned him the tint o' death, and said he: 'There's na a drop o' true bluid in a woman gin she is false.' And he turned to the wall and covered his eyes, an' your grannie rode home. There, 'tis all I ken—will it do?" "Ay, Jennie," said I; "heaven bless you!" And had I wings on my feet I could not have come to the cottage door sooner. I stood before my grandmother, trembling and white, and I said: "Oh, don't tell me, grannie, you have cheated me and robbed me of my true love by a lie. Did you steal the troth ring from my neck and give it back to Evan, as if from me? You've loved and honored my life long—"

She turned scarlet. "True love!" said she: "you've but one true love now—Squire Turner." "You have done it!" I cried. "It's written on your face." And she looked down at that and fell to weeping. My own true love was breaking his heart," she said. "My husband and I had loved for 40 years. I did it to save him. Could I let a girl's fancy, worth nothing, stand in my way, and see him a beggar in his old age? Oh, girl, girl!" And then I fell down at her feet like a stone. I knew nothing for an hour or more; but then, when I was better, and they left me with Jennie, I bade her fetch my hood and cloak and her own, and come with me, and away I went across the moor in the starlight to where the hall windows were ablaze with light, and asked the housekeeper to let me see the Squire. She stared at me for my boldness—no wonder—but called him. So in a moment he stood before me in his evening dress, with his cheeks flushed and eyes bright, and let me into a little room and seated me. "Agatha, my love, I hope no mischief brings you here." But I stopped him. "Not your love, Squire Turner," I said. "I thank you for thinking so well of me, but after all that has passed, I—"

"I could say no more. He took my hand. "Have I offended you, Agatha?" he said. "Not you. The offense—the guilt—is, I have been sorely cheated!" and all I could do was to sob. At last strength came to me. I went back to the first and told him all—how we

had been plighted to each other, waiting only for better prospects to be wed, and how, when he honored me by an offer of his hand, I angered my grandmother by owing to the truth, and of the ring grannie had stolen from my breast, and the false message that had been sent my promised husband from me. "And though I never see Evan Locke again," said I, "still I can never be another man's true love, for I am his until I die." Then as I looked, all the rich color faded out of the Squire's face, and I saw the sight seldom see more than once in a lifetime—a strong young man in tears. "At last he arose and came to me." "My little Agatha never loved me," he said. "Ah, me! The news is bad—I thought she did. This comes of vanity." "Many a higher and a fairer have hearts to give," I said. "Mine was gone ere you saw me." And then, kind and gentle, as though I had not grieved him, he gave me his arm and saw me across the moor, and at the gate paused and whispered: "Be at rest, Agatha. The Golden George has not sailed yet." I liked him better than I had ever done before that night when I told grannie that I would never wed him. Eh! but he was fit to be a king—the grandest, kindest, best of living men; who rode away with the break of the morning and never stopped till he reached Liverpool and found Evan Locke just ready to set foot upon the Golden George and told him tale that made his heart light and sent him back to me. Heaven bless him! And who was it that sent old grandfather the deed of gift that made the cottage his own, and who spoke a kind word to the gentry for young Dr. Locke that helped him into practice? Still no one but Squire Turner, whom we taught our children to pray for every night. For we were married, and in a few years had boys and girls at our knees; and when the eldest was eight, the thing I needed to make me quite happy happened—and from far over the sea, where he had been three twelve months, came our Squire with the bonniest lady that ever blushed beside him, and the hall had a mistress at last—a mistress who loved the Squire as I loved Evan. Eh! but it's an old story. She that I remembered a girl I saw in her coffin, withered and old. And then they opened the vault where the Squire had slept ten years to put her beside him; and I've nothing left of Evan, my life and my love, but his memory, and it seems as if every hope and dream of joy I ever had were put away under tombstones. And even the Golden George, the great strong ship that would have borne me dear from me, has mouldered away at the bottom of the sea. And I think my wedding ring is like to out-last us all, for I have it yet, and I shall be 90 to-morrow. "Ninty! It's a good old age, and it can't be long now before I meet Evan and the rest in heaven."

### IRISH FARMS AND IRISH FARMERS.

#### Let the Truth be Known.

Small farmers in Europe generally get only a bare living, even when they own their farms. In continental Europe such people are worse off than the similar class in Ireland. By the last census there were in Ireland 135,000 farms of from 15 to 30 statute acres, 123,000 of from 30 to 100, and 32,000 over 100. The 32,000 large farms comprised about 5,763,000 acres, say 38 per cent. of the total farmed land. Mr. Robert Griffin, of the Board of Trade, is on Financial statistics one of the first authorities in the United Kingdom. He gives the following from the Irish income tax returns. The acknowledged profits of the farmers who pay income tax in Ireland amount to £9,983,000, or \$48,617,000. No one pays income tax on less than £150, or \$750. Any portion of the income which is devoted to life insurance is exempt from taxation. If the income is less than £400 the first £120 is exempt from taxation, so that a farmer with an income of £400 would pay only on £280. The income tax for farmers in England is three-pence in the pound, or 14 per cent. In Ireland it is only twopence farthing, or rather less than one per cent., Ireland being the favoured nation in taxation as well as in Imperial outlay. We all know that where people practically assess themselves for taxation they generally underestimate. It is safe to say that to get at the real truth we ought to add at least one-fourth to these figures. This would show that the cash profits of the Irish farmers who acknowledge that their incomes exceed £750 amount to the enormous sum of \$69,771,000. This enables us to understand the fact, given on the authority of Mr. Willis, formerly of the Munster Bank, that in 1886 there stood to the credit of the Irish farmers at the joint stock and savings banks the sum of \$83,203,000. What is the number of Irish farmers who between them get this profit of \$69,771,000—how many acres do they occupy, and what is the average profit per acre? It will be fair to assume that nearly all the 32,000 farmers who rent more than 100 acres each pay income tax. But not many of those who profit of £750, after paying rent, their share of the taxes, wages, and all other business outgoings. If we assume that out of the 125,000 who occupy from 30 to 100 acres there are nearly one-sixth—say 21,800 acres—between them 1,765,000 acres—who plead guilty to the soft impeachment, this number added to the others would show that a total of 53,800 farmers renting 7,533,000 acres, or one-half of the farmed land of Ireland, get a net cash profit of \$69,771,000. The average would be \$1,120. It is quite certain that in the case of farmers occupying less than 50 acres (understanding by farming what we call farming) there are very few—if any—who acknowledge an annual cash profit of £750. There may be a few who cultivate flax who have to pay the tax, but the total raised in Ireland does not exceed in value \$3,400,000, and as it is a very exhausting crop, the rate of profit would be less than with the great staples—dairying and cattle-raising. A net cash profit of \$69,771,000 on 7,533,000 acres shows \$9.06 (eight dollars and six cents) per acre. The probability is that there are not so many acres contributing to the income tax, and that therefore the profit per acre is higher than this. There are upwards of 30,000 rented farms in Ontario. It is certain that not one in a hundred shows a cash profit of eight dollars per acre. We instance the case of a farmer in Ontario who rented one hundred acres of fairly good land, paid \$350 rent, and made a cash profit of \$344. His profit per acre was not one-half of that of the Irish farmer. Yields and prices are greater in Ireland than here, and the average rent fixed under the Land Act is only \$2.64 per acre. Mr. Giffen estimates the capital of the Irish farmers who pay income tax at eight times as much as their admitted profits, that is, £79,864,000, or \$388,936,000. Of course, this is only an estimate. It is thought by some good authorities—and we are inclined to agree with them—that it is rather high. But there are far more cattle on Irish farms than in the case here, and they are individually of greater value, which partly explains the estimate. Mr. Giffen also estimates that the incomes of those engaged in trades and professions who ought to pay income tax, but who do not do so, equal in amount one-fifth of the total sum actually assessed. Under the Land Act of 1881 the Irish farmers have acquired fixity of tenure, with the right of selling their interests in their farms. The rents are also fixed by Government officials. The practical result has been that one-third of the value of the land has been given to them, leaving the remaining two-thirds to the land-lords. Taken altogether the Irish farmers of fair-sized farms are to be congratulated. There is no other country in the world where rent-paying farmers of fair-sized farms are so well off as in Ireland. And yet the Irish farm is hot happy—if the above is correct and it seems indisputable. It endorses Henry George's thesis that the land laws of Ireland are most liberal and best in the world.

### WINTER WRINKLES.

Are women born contrary, or is it acquired. A man never gets so poor that he can't borrow trouble without security. "Papa, what is a fad?" "A fad, my son, is somebody else's peculiarity." Complaint is made that the choir sings out of tune. They should wear tunics. Marriages are called "matches" because they are sometimes followed by scratching. A boat is a funny thing, and so polite too. It never goes before the public without a bow. Lot's wife originated, "Looking Backward" thousands of years before Bellamy was born. The habitual drinker is hardly an amusing spectacle, and yet he raises a good many smiles. Experience has established the fact that lawsuits are more wearing on a man than any other. A man who is crushed under a falling ceiling would not be apt to consider the situation sublime. A fugitive poem is one that has escaped from its author after it has been out doing time in a scrap book. A woman who married a one legged man says it doesn't take much to make her husband "hopping mad." Never speak ill of anybody; you can do just as much execution with a shrug of the shoulders or a significant look. "I," said Blinks, "started life without a cent in my pocket." "And I," put in Hicks, "started in life without a pocket." Hot water is said to be a sure cure for every complaint, but we never knew a man to feel any better because his wife kept him in it. Dolly—"So you've named the mare after me, Jack, you dear, silly boy?" "Jack—Ye rather; she's the fastest little thing in the country." "Not this Eve, some other Eve," gallantly remarked Adam, when his good wife was accused of having munched the sacred apple. Aunt Mary—"Now, Jennie, let me see whether you know your lesson. Tell me who first discovered whalebone?" "Jonah, I guess." Rejected you? Why, I thought she had a great interest in you." "But then love isn't so much a matter of interest with her as capital." The man who will complain that a twenty-minute sermon is too long will sit half a day watching a couple of chess players making two moves. Guest—"Have you a fire-escape in this house?" Landlord—"Two of 'em, sir." "I thought so. The fire all escaped from my room last night and I came home freezing." Sportsman—"So your most ri—dashed off with the w— his wife acted while the hunting party was here. What are the grounds for divorce?" Gamekeeper—"The woods over there." "I beg pardon, but won't you ask your wife to remove her hat? I can't see the stage." Husband (whispering back)—"Ask her yourself, please. You don't know her as well as I do." Kicker—"Why do you keep Smythe in your store? He is no good as a clerk?" Merchant—"No, he would hardly do as the head of a department; but he is all right as a counter-irritant." Caller—"Please, sir, the master, Deacon Skinfint, died last night and the missus wants to know if you will preside at his funeral?" Long-Suffering Pastor—"Ye, certainly, with pleasure." Mrs. Grumbs—"If that stranger you were talking to said nothing about his wife, how do you know he is married?" Mr. Grumbs—"Oh, he looked so sort o' sympathetic when I told him I was." Farmer, with gun, who has just put up a sign, "To Trespassers—prepare for eternity!"—"I kinder like the idee, somehow or other. It has a religious feelin' runnin' through it, and at the same time means business." "Are they heir-at-law?" inquired an attorney of one of his clients interested in an inheritance. "At law" was the explosive response. "Well, I should say they were. They've busted the old man's will all to thunder." Miss Dasher—"I have been shopping to-day, papa, and I wish you would arrange to be at home when the things come. I have ordered everything C. O. D." Dasher, Senior—"Ah, yes! I understand; that means Call On Dad." A baseball fact— You can sometimes convince the most obstinate man Of a thing so he'll have to admit it, But you can't make the average girl understand It's a "strike" when the batsman don't hit it. First Chappie—"I say, ole chappie, the doctah says I must-aw-take more exercise or I'll be sick, don't you know." Second Chappie—"Do as the doctah says, me boy." First Chappie—"Ya-as, I'm goin' to discharge me vally and tie me own necktie." "You say you truly love me," began the young girl; "how much, sir?" But Alfred T. J. Assimer (a dry goods clerk) was too happy for rational conversation. "A dollar eighty-four, please," he exclaimed. "Shall I wrap it up?" he murmured mechanically. Mrs. Hire (to applicant for cook's place)—"But how am I to know that you have had experience? Have you any recommendation?" Cook (producing a paper)—"Experience is it I look at that, mum; it's a list of the crockery I've broke in the last twelve month." Very Bad Boy (who has been playing truant)—"What was de text dis mornin', Jimmy? I has ter tell der folks when I get home or else they'll suspec' somfin' wrong." Good Little Boy (who is never absent)—"It was 'Go to your am't and get slugged,' as I tell you the sermon was fine." Seasonable Rhymes: The man who when June had its fever begot Ne'er ventured to church 'cause 'twas thundering hot, Now holds him aloft from the sanctified fold, Because, as he says, "It's too thundering old."

### ZULU EXILES ON ST. HELENA.

#### The British Government Will Not Permit Them to Return to Their Homes.

LONDON, Feb.—The British Government has just refused to restore to their native country the banished Zulus who are now in St. Helena. Lord Knutsford said, in answer to a delegation which called upon him, praying for the release of these Zulu chiefs, that her Majesty's Government believed the repatriation of these chiefs would disturb the satisfactory relations between the Government and the Zulus. Ever since these chiefs were sent to St. Helena nearly two years ago the Zulu Defence Fund has been endeavoring to secure a revision of the heavy sentence. One of the chiefs is young Dinizulu, son of the famous king, Cetshwayo. This young man, who is hardly out of his teens, was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for alleged high treason, and seven subordinate chiefs received sentences of equal or greater severity. The friends of Dinizulu have pleaded his youth, his name, and his imperfect knowledge of English law, but all in vain. The friends of these Zulus assert that they had no time to prepare their defence, that they were tried without a jury, and that the evidence against them did not support the verdict. Their offence was in fighting Uabepu, who was supported by the British Government.

### Wealth of the Salvationists.

The Salvation Army is a corporation with a good deal of money and property attached to it. In Great Britain it is worth \$377,500; in Canada, \$98,928; in Australia, \$36,251; in New Zealand, \$14,798; in Sweden, \$13,598; in Norway, \$6,601; in South Africa, \$10,401; in Holland, \$7,188; in the United States, \$6,601; India, \$5,537; in Denmark, \$2,340; in France and Switzerland, \$10,000; total, \$644,618. The trade effects, stock, machinery, and goods on hand are valued at \$130,000. Some idea of the trade department may be gathered from the fact that they sell 22,000 Army bonnets every year to the female soldiers. To-day 2,861 corps are scattered over thirty-two different countries and colonies, with 9,349 officers and 13,000 noncommissioned officers.

### An Indian Brave's Joke.

Two young women were alone one day in Yankton, when a young Indian brave whom they knew came to see the man of the house. The man was away, and the Indian sat down to wait for him. During this interval the girls, being of a lively turn, began asking him questions about his former mode of life; among other things they asked him to give a war-whoop and show them how he scalped people, but he gave no answer. Some time after when they were talking of other subjects and had forgotten all about him, he sprang up suddenly, gave a war-whoop that made the house-top ring, then, snatching a big knife that lay on the table with one hand, he took the top-knot of one of the girls in the other and hand ran the back of the knife in this manner, and wore nearly frightened out of their wits, but he sat down and began to laugh, and told them he had done what they had asked him to do. They soon recovered from the shock and laughed heartily at the Indian's joke. Clara—"Oh, I have so much to say to you." Maude—"And I to you. Let's go to the opera to-night." From the report of the Registrar-General for Ireland it appears that in 1890 there were 787,901 acres in potatoes, a against 787,234 acres the year before, while the yield decreased 1,037,193 tons.

### BURIED BENEATH SNOW.

#### Villages and Railway Tracks in Russia Covered—Freezing People.

Terrific snow storms have prevailed recently throughout southern Russia. Deep drifts have been formed in many localities, and as a result whole villages and numbers of isolated houses have been almost buried in snow. The railroad tracks are entirely useless from the piles of snow resting upon them, and the only means of communication between the villages and towns is by sleighs. Added to the inconvenience to which the inhabitants are subjected are the sufferings which they are forced to endure on account of the bitterly cold weather experienced in the snowed-up districts. Numbers of people are already known to have been frozen to death, and it is feared that as the snow disappears there will be further loss of life revealed. The city of Kharkov, the capital to the government of Kharkov, on the Kharkov, is so completely isolated by the snow which has fallen upon it and in its neighborhood that the only way of communicating with its inhabitants is by telegraph. Kharkov is a city of about 200,000 inhabitants, and it is feared that should its complete isolation continued for any length of time there will be terrible suffering, owing to the scarcity of provisions among its poorer classes of inhabitants.