

POETRY.

BARFOOTED AFTER THE COWS.

"The boys" had come back to the farm. Which all through one's life bears a charm; And though we were all study men, We thought to live over again.

The pond and the swift skimming swallow: The wood where the owl used to hallow— Who-oo! who-oo!

We tumbled down over the mows; The grass in the meadow was growing, The cows in the meadow were lowing

"Who-oo! who-oo!" The barn full of hay, Where many a boy

Like that of a boy Running barfooted after the cows!

We ate of the apples that fell From the harvest tree over the well; For never in life could we meet

With apples that seemed half so sweet; Nor water had we ever tasted Like that which the spring ever wasted;

For God made the vintage to flow From the winneps of pebbles below.

The squirrel so proud of his tail, The chipmunk who travels by rail, The blackbird, the robin, and the dove,

Each gave us a greeting that day, The pastimes of boyhood we courted In places where once we had sported,

And when the old dinner horn blew We felt the old hunger new.

"Was more like eating a dream! We waded and fished in the stream, While somehow looked shallow and small,

Nor did the old trees seem tall; Each old of boyhood seemed shattered, And even the kingfisher clattered,

No power can bring back the joys Of childhood or overgrown boys.

Not the same was the pond nor the wallow, The wood where the owl used to hallow, Who-oo! who-oo!

The barn full of hay Seemed smaller that day, We tumbled down over the mows,

New grass in the meadow was growing, Strange cows in the meadow were lowing

"Who-oo! who-oo!" We were not the boys Who ran barfooted after the cows.

SELECT STORY.

LOU'S IDEA.

BY ALICE FERRY.

There were three girls of us—Lou, Bess, and myself; and we all lived together in a small, neat gray cottage, with roses growing over the front porch, a trim lawn beneath, and a big meadow of sweet clover, whose pink and white blossoms stretched for half an acre at the back of the old orchard of gnarled apple trees.

Lou was the eldest, and chief money-maker of the flock, walking two and a half miles, to and from the neighboring city, where her school was located, every night and morning. Bess was an artist-dressmaker, that is, she manufactured "almond" "Parisian" costumes, for the aspiring village maidens, who desired to appear equal to the more pretentious city beauties—setting aside part of the proceeds earned thereby to defray the cost of her weekly painting lesson.

Penelope, played the part of housewife, and chef de cuisine, they were good enough to say, very acceptably, to my elder and more talented sisters.

Father and mother had died within a few months of each other, when Lou was nineteen, Bess sixteen, and I twelve, leaving us only our pretty little house, and our strong love for each other to help us do battle for our daily bread.

We had managed on the whole very successfully. Bess working every spare moment at her usual job—myself as said—becoming worthy of a better model than the "dressmaker's dummy," while I devoted myself, with equal ardor, to the care of my flourishing poultry, Bartlett pears, and strawberry beds; pet-hobbies that brought me in quite a tidy little sum, thus keeping my supply of pocket money intact, and enabling me to replenish my own wardrobe quite respectably, thanks to Bess's fertile brain and clever fingers.

In this way we all contrived to keep together, and live in comparative comfort, and strict economy, without being compelled—as yet—to adopt that last resource, throwing open wide our dear front door, and inviting the festive board to cross its sacred threshold.

"I want to keep 'home' girls," Lou had said, when things seemed growing rather dark with us, the summer after we were thrown on our own resources. "No matter how much fret and worry we have on our work-a-day world, there is always the thought, a peaceful home awaits us, and it will never be the same again, once a hand of bells, beads, and blazers, have made acquaintance with every nook and cranny. No! don't let us say anything more about taking boarders."

It was a pretty village in which we lived; bordering on a bay and river, with tall, graceful elms lining the principal streets, and was fast growing popular with a good class of Boston and New York people as a summer boarding place.

We used often to hear flattering comments on our quiet little cottage, from passers-by, and indeed, it did look pretty enough, with its bit of emerald lawn in front, and the heart-shaped bed of pansies which Bess had designed, and I had filled with plants from Vick's conservatory.

But what went on within just the same thought June had come, and the world was full of sunshine and song. Lou had brought home great sprays of sweetwreath, to deck the parlor, where Bess sat at work all day, and I scrubbed away at the wash-tub, or burned my face the color of a boiled lobster over my strawberry bed, in spite of the protestations showered upon me.

"I'd rather work outdoors any day," I maintained, stoutly; "it's Bess who deserves the pity, shut up in that dark room from morning till night, fitting and making people's clothes; or, you yourself, Lou—but vacation is near, and I am thankful to say, as my petter, I ask nothing better than to toss around among my plants and things."

One evening, we sat out upon the front doorstep, watching the sun sink and glorify the western world. Bess was dressed in a dainty mull gown, made in one of her picturesque styles, and sitting her winsome loveliness to perfection. We were all very proud of Bess, who was the beauty of the family. Lou was reading aloud matches of "The Pilgrims," a book she had taken from the circulating library that morning, for our evening literary treat.

"I repeat it would be next best to seeing all these delightful places; but I find it only fills my heart with vain yearning, to think I am shut away from the real thing," she sighed, closing the book on a fascinating description of the ascent of Mount Washington. "Oh, girls! what wouldn't I give to see the White Mountains!"

"Ah!" echoed Bess, in response, instinctively feeling for her drawing pad and pencil, while I thought of my botanical portfolio, and the bliss of adding to it a leaf from the top of Mount Washington, or a flower from the world-renowned Noth.

"You must be so lovely in October," I murmured, thoughtfully, to myself, "I always thought the mountains must be grandest, then, with their crown of fiery leaves."

"I wish we could go," sighed Bess once more; "we haven't had a single lake since last summer, when we camped out on Piney Island. The mountain air would be just the thing for Lou's cough. Dr. Brier said so. Poor little Bess needs a holiday sadly, and I could get so many new ideas and sketches to work up. Besides, there's the prettiest mountain costume in one of my fashion magazines. I could have cried, when I had to fit those fleshy Delaware girls out, in one like it, the other day, for a summer in the Adirondacks. Wait just a minute, and I'll show it to you!"—darting into the house, and returned with a well-thumbed copy of Godey's Lady's Book.

"Lou should be blue, with black braid, Mine blue, with white, and Pen's blue and scarlet, with Apine hats to match," she explained, as we all bent over it. "Now, isn't it a beauty? And so cheap! Twenty-five cents a yard, and made in a twinkling!"

"Well! of course, we can't do anything but talk about it," I remarked, resignedly. "So I move we buy a new hammock, and a dollar croquet set for the lawn. Why, what's the matter, Lou?"

"Eureka! I have an idea," she cried, enveloping me in an enormous hug, "and you, dear little busy bee, will have to be the good fairy who brings it true, while we helpless creatures act as your clumsy hand-maidens. So listen now, and don't look so scared, while I tell you all about it."

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"All our set think I—would be just perfect," she added, as they left the car, "if only it had an ice-cream saloon, or something of the sort, so we wouldn't be obliged to travel three miles after it in boiling-hot weather like this."

"Then, girls, I thought of Pen's delicious iced sherbet, and didn't carry those girls one bit when they stopped at the most fashionable saloon in the city; but it just popped into my head: 'Why couldn't we have an ice-cream establishment?' You know Farmer Forbes offered to sell his place in Jersey bridge to me, and I would only let her graze part of the time in our clover patch; and there's Pen's eggs and strawberries. We could all help, and perhaps go to the mountains, after all."

"Lou is making a long story short, but we ought to make long story short, freer, sugar, chocolate, and vanilla, reserving my own delicious fresh fruit for 'strawberry flavoring, and all the rest of the set necessary for successful cream making; a fabulous recipe for which I had scolded or other been possessed of."

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WHO IS TO BLAME.

Scene—Breakfast table.

Big Brother—What makes you look so sleepy, Mary? Little Brother—Hey! Mary had a bean last night. You ought to have seen him coming up the walk! Oh my! And how red Mary's face was when she opened the door!

Mother—Her face isn't far from red now. I think I must tell that he did not leave the house until 10 o'clock. Father—Mary, he must bring his own coat along. I can't afford to keep up such late fees.

Big Brother—He is nearly red-headed, and tall enough to do for a flag-staff. Little Brother—But didn't he give me lots of candy, though?—and I heard him say to Mary—

Older Sister—She talked in her sleep last night, and what do you think she said? Poor sensitive Mary flies from the room in a passion of anger and mortification, followed by a merry peal of laughter. The mother and father mean no harm by their thoughtless encouragement of this cruel chaffing.

"She will have to get used to a little teasing," is the careless comment; and Mary is left to cool her anger unmolested except by an occasional battering at the locked door from the irrepressible little brother.

"It's no use," says Mary, with her burning face buried in the pillows. "He shall never come here again! I will meet him down town, or at Jennie's, or go driving with him, but I won't stand their constant making fun of him."