

OUR SHORT STORY

"Uncle Caleb's Will."

"You mean that you can't put yourself out to give your mother's brother a night's lodging?" said Caleb Cheverel, bitterly.

The March wind, bearing dust and grit and bits of flying paper, on its restless wings, came whistling around the corner, lifting the old man's faded comforter's ends and turning his blue nose a shade blue still, while Mrs. Larkins, his eldest niece, stood in her doorway, filling up the aperture with her ample person in such a way as to suggest the familiar legend, "No admittance!"

Mrs. Larkins was stout and blooming and cherry-checked, dressed in substantial alpaca, with gay gold brooch and earrops, which bespoke anything but abject poverty.

Uncle Caleb was thin and meager and shabbily dressed, with glossy locks in his overcoat and finger-ends protruding from his worn gloves like ancient rosebuds coming out of their calyx.

"I'm very sorry," said Mrs. Larkins, stiffly, "but we have but one spare room, and that is at present occupied. Of course, I should be glad to do all I could for you, but—"

"I understand, I understand," said Uncle Caleb, turning calmly away. "I'll go to my niece Jenny. I wish you a very good evening."

Mrs. Larkins closed the door with a sigh of evident relief.

"I dare say Jenny will take care of him," she said, philosophically. "Jenny has a smaller family than I have. But I don't see why he came up to London instead of staying peaceably down in Tortoise Hollow, where he belongs."

Mrs. Jenny Eldertop, Mr. Cheverel's youngest niece, had a smaller family than her sister Rebecca, but then she had a smaller income as well. She had just finished a vigorous day's cleaning when Uncle Caleb was announced.

"Oh, dear the man!" said Mrs. Eldertop, wringing her parboiled fingers out of a basin of steaming soapuds. "What sends him here, just now of all times in the world?"

And she went down stairs ungraciously enough to the street door, where her husband was welcoming the old stranger.

"Come in, Uncle Cheverel—come in!" said honest Will Eldertop. "We're all upside down here—we mostly are. But that's the spring cleaning is going on. But there's room for you if you don't mind the children and their noise and a little smell of whitewash in the spare room."

Mrs. Eldertop's welcome was by no means so cordial. She looked to use a common expression, "vinegar and darning needles" at the visitor, while in her inmost soul she calculated the probability of the cold boiled ham and turnips holding out for once more at supper.

"Come, Jenny, don't scowl so," said Mr. Eldertop, when Uncle Caleb had gone up stairs to his room, and she and her husband were alone.

"A good for nothing old vagabond," said Mrs. Eldertop, acidly, "without a half-penny laid up ahead."

"For all that, he's your guest," said her husband, "and you're bound to be civil to him. And here's his overcoat now, with a zig-zag rent in it. Just mend it while you are waiting for the kettle to boil."

"I won't," said Mrs. Eldertop. "All right," retorted her lord and master. "Then I'll take it next door to Alexia Allen to mend."

Now, Miss Allen, the tailoress, who lived in the adjoining house, was pretty and buxom to look upon, and Mrs. Eldertop had nursed comfortably a jealousy of her for the last four years.

"You'll do no such thing," said Jenny, tartly. "Hush it here."

And she threaded a needle with a black silk and thrust her finger into a thimble, very much as a determined crusader of old might have donned sword and shield for some encounter with the Moslems.

"What's that?" said Mr. Eldertop, for a folded paper fell from the pocket of the garment as his wife turned it upside down.

"Some foolery or the other," answered Mrs. Jenny, brusquely.

"I fancy you're mistaken," said Mr. Eldertop. "It's the rough draft of a will."

"But he has got nothing to leave," shrieked Mrs. Eldertop.

"I'm not so certain of that," retorted Will. "Just look here, Jenny! I give and bequeath to my beloved nieces, in equally divided parts, the sum of £10,000, at present invested in consols, and—"

"Go on!" said Mrs. Eldertop, breathlessly. "Read the rest."

"There is no rest," said her husband. "That's the end of the paper. It's only a rough draft. I tell you, and now, CURIOUS CUCKOOS."

The cuckoo is generally known only as a bird with a very monotonous note, a continuous cry of "cuckoo, cuckoo" over and over again. Among naturalists, however, the cuckoo is known as a bird that never builds a nest for itself, but takes advantage of one already built by some more industrious bird.

There is a good deal of the cuckoo about these advertisers who, instead of making a success of their own, seek to profit by the success of some one else has made with much effort and labor. It is so with those imitations of Dr. Pierce's methods, by which free medical advice is offered, although those who make the offer are without qualified medical ability or experience. And the cry raised in some cases of "woman, woman, woman write to woman" makes the resemblance to the cuckoo even stronger.

There is as far as known no qualified woman physician connected with any proprietary medicine establishment, and none therefore competent to give medical advice. It is certain that there is no one, man or woman, who can offer free medical advice backed by such knowledge and experience as is possessed by Dr. R. V. Pierce, chief consulting physician to the World's Dispensary, Buffalo, N. Y. For over thirty years Dr. Pierce has made a specialty of the treatment of diseases peculiar to women. In that time he has treated over half-a-million women, ninety-eight per cent. of whom have been perfectly cured. Every sick woman is invited to consult Dr. Pierce by letter absolutely without charge or cost. Every letter is held as strictly private and sacredly confidential, and all answers are mailed securely sealed in perfectly plain envelopes bearing no printing whatever upon them.

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what's your opinion of Uncle Cheverel's fortunes?"

"He's been a miser all along," said Mrs. Eldertop, her face growing radiant and traveling around the round of her money in fumes. "A regular old character—just like those one reads about in novels. Put it back, Will—put it back. We've no business to be prying into Uncle Caleb's secrets; but what a blessing it is he came here instead of stopping at Rebecca Larkins'."

And when Uncle Caleb came down stairs he was surprised at the sweet smile with which his niece Jenny welcomed him.

"Been mending my coat, eh?" said Uncle Cheverel. "Thank you kindly, Jenny. I caught it on a nail yesterday and I was calculating to sew it up myself, when I could borrow a needle and thread."

"I'm glad to be of use, Uncle Caleb," beamed Mrs. Eldertop. "Johnny, put on your cap and run to the grocer's for a smoked mackerel for your uncle's breakfast. I hope you found your room comfortable, Uncle Caleb."

Before she slept that night Mrs. Eldertop put on her bonnet and shawl and ran around to the Larkins' manse to impart her wonderful tidings to sister Rebecca.

"You don't say so," cried out the astonished matron.

"Gospel truth!" said Mrs. Eldertop. "I saw it with my own eyes."

"He must come here," said Mrs. Larkins, resolutely.

"Not if I know it," said Mrs. Eldertop. "He's my guest and my guest he shall remain."

"But I'm to share equally with him," said Mrs. Larkins. "I ought to show him some attention, the dear, generous-hearted old man."

"Lest he should alter his will," shrewdly remarked sister Jenny. "You always were a worldly creature, Becky!"

"No more than yourself!" said Mrs. Larkins, bristling up. "But it's my family I'm thinking of, Jenny. I'll tell you what—I'll come around and see him tomorrow."

"But don't you breathe a syllable about the will," said Mrs. Eldertop, in a mysterious whisper.

"Oh, not for worlds," said Mrs. Larkins, fervently.

During the next week Uncle Cheverel was overwhelmed with civilities. On Thursday a new suit of clothes arrived, with Mrs. Larkins' best love and compliments. On Friday Mrs. Larkins came with an open barouche to take dear Uncle Caleb for a drive in the park. And on Saturday Mrs. Eldertop burst into tears and declared she should never be happy again if her mother's only brother didn't pledge himself then and there to make his future home with hers, and Will, future home with hers, and Will.

Uncle Caleb looked a little puzzled. "Well," said he, "if you really make a point of it—but I was intending to meet Cousin John at Gravesend."

"Dear uncle promise me to stay here always," cried Mrs. Eldertop, hysterically.

"Just as you say, Niece Jenny," assented the old man, complacently.

Mrs. Eldertop felt that she had carried her point.

But when Mr. and Mrs. Larkins came on Sunday afternoon to press a similar invitation, Uncle Caleb opened.

"My importance seems to have 'gone up' in the market," he observed, quaintly. "I never was in such demand among my relatives before. But I can't be in two places at once, that's plain."

And he decided to remain with Mrs. Eldertop, greatly to the indignation of the Larkins family, who did not hesitate to hint boldly at unfair advantages and undue impartiality.

But just as Mrs. Larkins was rising to depart, with her handkerchief to her eyes, little Johnny Eldertop came clamoring for a piece of paper to cut a kite tail from.

"Go along," said Mrs. Eldertop, impatiently.

"We have no paper here. Go to Amelia."

"I did on, little chap—hold on," said Uncle Caleb, fumbling in his overcoat pocket—he had been just starting for a walk when the Larkins party arrived—"here's a bit as is of no use to nobody."

And he produced the "rough draft" and bestowed it on Johnny.

"One side's written on," said he, "and 'tother ain't. It was lying on the floor in Mr. Watkins's law office, when I stopped in to see Joseph Hall was employed there as porter still. An old chum of mine Hall was in Tortoise Hollow. I can't bear to see even a bit of paper wasted, so I axed the clerk if it was of any use. He said no—it was only a draft of Dr. Falcon's will. Dr. Falcon made a new will every six months, he said, so I just picked it up and put it in my pocket. Everything comes in use once in seven years, they say, and this is just right for little Johnny's kite tail."

Mrs. Larkins looked at Mrs. Eldertop. Mr. Eldertop stared into the spectacled eyes of Mr. Larkins.

Uncle Caleb chuckled benevolently as little Johnny skipped away with the piece of paper which had been freighted with such wealth and anticipation.

Mrs. Larkins took leave without any unnecessary formula of adieu, and Mrs. Eldertop took occasion to tell Uncle Caleb that perhaps he had better prosecute his original design of the Gravesend visit.

So Uncle Caleb Cheverel went to Gravesend, where Cousin John was as poor and warm-hearted as himself, and he was never invited to return to London again.

Five years later Uncle Caleb departed this life and left behind him £20,000 in consols—willed to John Clark. To his "dear nieces," Jane Eldertop and Rebecca Larkins, he left each to pay for the trouble he put them to when he visited them. To say that there was joy in the nieces' households when the will was read would be to say what is false, for, of the old man could have guessed at all the unkind things that would be uttered regarding him, I doubt if he would have left them even £5 each.

—Exchange.

SKYLARK'S GLORIOUS SONG.
[From the Minneapolis Journal.]

Need I say a word about the skylark and its wholly joyous song? It inspired one of Jeremy Taylor's most beautiful and best-known passages—the lark rising from his bed of grass and soaring upward, singing as he rises and hoping to get to heaven and climb above the clouds; singing "as if it had learned music from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministering here below." And it inspired, too, one of the finest odes in the English language, Shelley's finest work, his "supreme ode." But, as may be said of another ode, it is "not in tune with the bird's song and the feeling it does and ought to awaken." The rapture with which the

strain springs up at first dies down before the close into Shelley's ever haunting melancholy.

Like Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale," it is no key to the bird's song. It does not teach us anything of the thought and feeling which inspired that quivering, ascending embodiment of joy that pilgrim of the sky, hiding itself in the glorious light of the summer heavens. The skylark may be heard as early as January—I heard it this year in November—as may also the rarer woodcock whose song, uttered from trees or when flying, we recognize from its likeness to that of the skylark, though it lacks much of its rush and spirit and haste.

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

Summer's Fashions.

Harper's Bazar says: Foulards are in high favor for all womankind. Suitable designs have been provided for every age. Elbow sleeves are popular, and sashes are again in favor for the freshening of summer gowns. Some of these pass over the right shoulder and tie at the left side. Others are passed around the waist, and are knotted at the left side of the front, at the waist-line. A caprice of the moment is to use a long scarf of point d'esprit, with tucked and pleated ruffles at the ends as a sash or girdle. These are seen in many varying lengths but are all tied at the left side, with ends depending from one looped bow. Where silk scarfs are used, the ends are fringed and knotted. Fringe for sash-ends must be fully eight inches long when knotted, to have the seal of really recent style.

Narrow fringes obtain very generally for dress trimmings, but these are of the American variety known as the "Tom Thumb" fringes.

Every woman shows an increasing demand for directoire hats. Wide brims, bent and quaintly turned to suit the needs of individual faces, "jam-pot" crowns—round, wide, and flat-topped—and poke-bonnets tied under the chin, indicate the kind of novelties we may expect to see in the autumn millinery displays. The new bonnets are likely to excel in richness of trimming rather than in change of shape; and the favorite dress, that suit so many faces, are sure to have a fair representation in the new season's hats.

Black and white ostrich plumes will be among the new trimmings for evening gowns. They will be disposed of about the corsage and skirt, and in the elaborate coiffures which are predicted. Fluffy curls are to edge the brow, and the hair will be dressed with many wavy effects, but generally built high out of the crown of the head. The excessive use of pompadour frames has been the "death-warrant" to this picturesque style of hair-dressing, and massive braids wound around the head, and the hair will be the preferred style for the street, with the hair brushed softly back from the temples.

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How Consumption Is Curled.

Over 150,000 deaths from consumption occur yearly in Germany, a fact which has inspired some of the ablest scientific minds to action. There has just adjourned at Berlin a tuberculosis congress, at which the best means for the prevention and cure of consumption was discussed. The German emperor, to whom report of the finding was made, is said to have exclaimed that the greatest of cures would be a little more soap and water. For consumption has again been proved not to be a hereditary malady, but one transmitted by the breath, and by the presence of bacilli in the air. The congress has decided that the needed attention required to keep the body in good condition and enabling it to throw off the disease might be given. And certainly it would be well if some one could do to prevent those long and fruitless journeys away from home in vain search of a climate—journeys which every consumptive, in dying regrets, since they carry him away from those who love him, and with whom he might have had some few more happy days.

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Lord Salisbury Severe.

So great a statesman as Lord Salisbury publicly mourns the fact that in woman's dress the cult of beauty is dying out. His belief is that if there were a Dante to write an artistic code, the lowest circle would be assigned to women who dress themselves in divided skirts. Might not the next circle await the women whose trailing skirts are defiled with the filth of the streets?

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A Convenient Place.

Modistes have for some time been trying to contrive a convenient pocket for a woman's watch, one that will not interfere with the fit of a tailor-made gown or the set of a fancy waist. The difficulty is adjusted by inserting a tiny slit in the sleeve of the left arm, half-way between the elbow and wrist, on the inside seam. The watch will be secure there and is easy to get at. Buttons are sewed on to close the flap of the pocket, and a piece of ribbon along the sleeve as a trimmings.

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All for Effect.

When, as is often the case, a petticoat costs more than the gown, it behooves the wearer to show it, especially nowadays, when it is the fashion to have the hat match the undergarment in tint, so that to get the full effect of a well thought-out costume there must be a tint of the same color at both extremities.

To dauntlessly shake out a skirt after long exposure to the sun, or to conveyance and lift it just to trifle at the crossing, and to give it the right swing when taking a seat, so as to show the bright ruffles, and do it all without obvious intent, is no easy feat.

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Receipts That Have Been Tried.

Luncheon Dish—Ten eggs hard boiled; Chop whites, grated yolks. One pint milk, scalding hot, poured over two tablespoonfuls of flour rubbed smooth together. Add whites and cook one minute. Heat red yolks of toast buttered. Heap the mixture on, using care not to let it cover the edges. Put a great yolk on top, dust with pepper, and serve garnished with ribbons of crisp bacon.

Mutton Sandwiches—Chop cold cooked mutton fine, and to each pint add a teaspoonful of butter, a little lemon juice, spread thickly on slices of buttered whole wheat bread.

The Poets.

The Requiem of the Sea.

Fear not to sleep—
Thy shroud is woven of heaven's tears,
The tall stars
And the blessed candles
Burning at thy head;
The incense of the ocean,
The wind that whispers its response
To the deep intoning of the sea;
The stars and winds and waters
Say mass forever for thy soul.
Fear not to sleep—
These waves were once
The pathway of our Lord.

—Paul Kester.

Good-Night, Angela!

When de evenin' come an' de clouds float by,
Boun' home to dah eash'n bed,
Dat wee lil' chile he look at de sky
He he nod dat cu'ly head;
He look whar de sun done paint de wes'
Wif a beautiful pink an' gray,
He nod dat head as he sink to res',
An' dis lil' song he say:

"Good-night, angels! meet you in de mawnin'!"
Has to go to Sleepy Land away;
Good-night, angels! see you at de dawnin'!

When you come wif me to spen' de day,"

When de evenin' come an' de darkness tries
Fo' to lull de worl' to res',
Dat wee lil' chile he close his eyes,
An' sleep on his shan' an' pray,
De painted wes' done lose its light,
When de shadows 'cross it creep;
But de angels tellin' dat chile good-night,

Kase he smilin' in his sleep,

"Good-night, angels! meet you in de mawnin'!"
Has to go to Sleepy Land away;
Good-night, angels! see you at de dawnin'!

When you come wif me to spen' de day."

—George V. Hobart.

HOUSEKEEPING IN INDIA

In That Country It Is a Thing of Many Trials.

Servants Have Unalterable Rules of Their Own, Which They Follow Religiously.

[G. W. Stevens, in the London Mail.]

Servants at home know everything; in India they know yet more. The quiet man who waits at the table knows more English than they pretend. Usually there is somebody in the house who can read English letters. Anglo-Indian life is all in verandas, behind open windows, transparent blinds and doors, who had not such doors, the servant knows every other servant, as well as the clerks at the bank and in the government offices. Therefore a man will first hear of his impending promotion or transfer from his bearer. And when he is promoted his wife, hoping to save money to eke out the ever-nearer retirement pension, will discover that the expenses have arisen in exact proportion to the rise of pay. "The presence has come to pay now," says the virtuous khansamah (male servant). "Does it become the presence to live like a mere assistant commissioner? I have seen many sahibs, and I know how they live."

"Where does it go?" Do not ask, but count from time to time the bangles on the khansamah's leading wife. You will notice that they enlarge and multiply. The word for this process is "dasturi," a term which the khansamah asks of the English "housekeeper's" discount. You may say confidently that no money changes hands between a sahib and a native without it has borne commission. "What is the price of this bazar of a tin plate?" the khansamah asks of the chaprassi. "God knows I am a poor man." So by making inquiries it can be known. So he disappears around the corner, where he waits the pall merchant, and any making inquiries it is known. Every man has his price.

But if the rich man's expenses increase with his pay the poor man's remain steady. The pinched married subaltern gets exactly the same food and servants and everything as the plump commissioner. The Indian servant may be a tyrant, but he is also a providence. He asks no more than your all: give him that honesty and he will see that you want for nothing. His honor is in his sahib and his sahib's establishment. It is his pride that he never steals, contrary to custom; he will take a farthing commission on twopenny, but he is safe as the grave with you, while you are making inquiries it is known. When the exile is over and the sahib returns across the black water he weeps quite sincerely. "Behold, I am grown old in the service of the presence. The presence he my father and mother; what now shall this dust-like one do?" Then one day, in the quiet-and-battered case of his native village, he hears that his old master's son is on the way to India. God knows how, but he hears it, and when the boy lands at Bombay an old man creeps up to him bearing a chit from his father. "Be-

hold, it would be a shame to me if any but me should be the presence's bearer, seeing that I have many times held him on my knee when he was so high." So he is the presence's bearer. The old man, who had retired rich, goes back to a general's establishment, begins again in a subaltern's quarters, and serves the young sahib till his infirmities will let him serve no longer. Then he goes back to his village again, with a pension, and sends his son to serve the presence instead.

The bearer and khansamah may well take loads on themselves, for there are agonies in Indian housekeeping which must fall on the khansamah alone. How would you like to do your shopping at a thousand miles range? Except in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, there is hardly a possible shop in India. You must think what you want and order it a fortnight in advance, even so it will probably arrive a fortnight later. And then, if people are coming to stay out Christmas . . . I have heard of a resident's wife who had to send 200 miles for a flock of sheep for the needs of her house party, and then the local Brahmins intercepted them and put them in the pond, and religion or dainties that what has once been in the pond can never be slaughtered. There are other sorrows. Go into the Indian drawing-room; it is shady and cool and charming, but nearly always it seems a little bare. The rest of the furniture—the pretty nothings—are packed in boxes in Calcutta or Bombay or Pondi. The piano is staying with a friend, and the silver has not yet come back from the bank. Leave one year, and transfer to the next camp next month, and an imperative charge to the hills for the khansamah to his wife, weather after that—the Indian court is ever a place of transition. It is a mere caravanserai—a double exile. We have at home no fixed place of banishment. It is not, anyhow, that the mother must send away her children; she may not even live with her furniture.

In this fugitive encampment on alien soil the very order of meals is shaken. When it is hot you rise before dawn, make your chotani, your tea and toast. Then for your rice, your bicycle spin, your game of racquets in the first hours of the sun. Then home to dress, and then breakfast, and then a day's work through the long, long heat and glare. Tiffin you have no stomach for, and so you wait for tea. After that life is bearable again; there is air if you only gasp hard enough. There is the drive by the heights of Calcutta, on the shore of Back Bay at Bombay, on the Marina at Madras. Then for men the club; in similar stations the club is free to women also. All prepare for dinner with billiards or badminton, which is battledore and shuttlecock over a net. Then dinner under the punkah; or maybe it is dance night, and everybody forgets hot today and hotter tomorrow and the whole weary world.

Sunday brings little respite. Man has his week's arrears of work; for woman, if she cares, there is church at the big station; in the small, the little Scotch missionary, or the residence of the deputy commissioner, reading the service in a drawing-room to his wife and his assistant, and the engineer's wife—the engineer is out on the canal—and the doctor is a native—the railway

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