

A Vision of Suns, or A "Light" Reflection

A Short Story by M. E. Shipman

It was mid-August and 5:30 a.m. Mrs. Roscoe sat near the east window of her trim new bungalow enjoying the tang of the salt sea air from the Pacific, the fragrance of roses, honeysuckle and clover, but possibly, most of all, the hush of early morning.

Every morning at this hour, she was to be found in the same place, as she belonged to the work-a-day world and rose early to have breakfast ready for Mr. Roscoe who went to work at 5 a.m. Then her eldest son went to work at 6 o'clock; then the younger Roscoes were called promptly at 7 o'clock, breakfasted and despatched punctually to school.

Among her neighbours there were those who laughed at Mrs. Roscoe for being so painstaking in waiting on the different members of her family. But Mrs. Roscoe believed it was her duty and made a joy of that duty. Those who told her that their husbands cooked their own breakfasts, and that it was all nonsense to make a slave of herself, were promptly told that she knew some men who cooked their own breakfast and that they found it necessary, in order to satisfy the inner man, to step into a saloon on their way to work and have a glass of beer or something stronger. She vowed that she preferred to run opposition to the saloons, and that her John never thought of having a glass after one of her breakfasts.

Then, when John took his leave, she had a whole hour of solitude, broken only by the twitter of birds in the not far distant giant pines. Some women would have plunged into the day's work but Mrs. Roscoe regarded this hour as sacred. She reveled in her own undisturbed thoughts. Sometimes backward they would turn, over her years even to childhood; more often she would anxiously scan the future. What did this great western coast hold for her boys and girls; this great booming, boosting atmosphere of ambition and opportunity?

She would be alone again when Alfred went to his work but the great outside world would have awakened. The pavements would clang with traffic; the street-cars would have begun their daily routine; the miners would be coming and going, changing shifts. There would be no more quietness.

The evenings were always spent by the Roscoes, at this time of year, on the west side of the bungalow, where they could see the glorious sunset. Seated under fruit-trees, which bent low with ripening fruit, the little ones weary of play, the older boys deep in tales of trout and salmon, would recount the adventures and successes of the day, while the sun shot arrows of gold across the blue of the Pacific.

Thus passed the days, all alike as the strands of a rope, which made up Mrs. Roscoe's life.

But on this bright August morning, as she watched the sun rise above the distant mountain, she was awed by the strange mellow light around it. Already the sun had climbed to some distance but she was sure the sun had never looked as it did now. She watched. She could not believe her eyes. She went to the door and as she watched, she could discern other suns coming from behind the original one. Her heart grew sick. Her mother had talked a great deal about what is recorded in the Bible about signs in the heavens. Was the end of the world drawing near? She believed it was. Somehow, she could not recall the exact words. She had a Bible of her own, of course, but she could not remember what she, herself had read; but her memory went back to what her mother had read and talked of. She remembered distinctly of her mother repeating and remarking on the passage: "There are to be signs and wonders in the sky," or at least she thought she did.

More distinct they grew, suns red, blue and green coming out from behind the real sun and floating away. They came nearer and nearer. Now they were hovering close to the bungalow. Was the end to be immediately? Would she ever see John again? Her limbs trembled. She sank into a chair.

At last, she decided that she must call Alfred and the children. The end must not come on them as a thief in the night.

"Alfred, Alfred," she called almost hysterically.

Alfred, alarmed at the tone of his mother's voice, awoke more quickly than usual, and called "Is it time to rise?"

"No, not quite, but I am afraid something is going to happen. Look at the sky." She trembled expecting in another instant her boy would be in a panic of fear.

Alfred looked out of his chamber window and coolly replied: "I don't see anything wrong with the sky."

"You don't; don't you see all those colored suns floating away? Some coming right to the house. See that one going down through the branches of that pear tree. And you don't see them?" questioned Mrs. Roscoe incredulously.

Alfred laughed: "You've been looking at the sun too long, that's all. All those colored suns are in your eyes only. As for the sky, it often has that mellow shade in the hot weather."

Mrs. Roscoe was puzzled, stupified. She rubbed her eyes and closed them for a minute, and lo, the colored suns were all gone.

MY GARDEN.

I have a garden all my own,
To which I oft retreat;
And though I always go alone
My dearest there I meet:
'Tis filled with sights that charm the eye
And perfumes haunt the air;
'Tis always summer 'neath its sky—
There's beauty everywhere!

The birds make music with their song
Within its leafy shade;
The gurgling brooklets run along
Like silver through the glade;
And cataracts that fume and foam
Leap down their rocky dell—
A haunt where Pan would love to roam
Or wood-nymphs deign to dwell!

This blest idyllic Eden fair,
You ask where one may find.
It has no being anywhere
But only in my mind:
Alone I seek its magic gate,
My fancy turns the key;
And all the friends I want, await
To bear me company!

And Oh, the sprightly things I say,
The kindly things I do!
And there is none to say me nay,
No cares my steps pursue:
I lead in deeds of high emprise,
In beauty's eyes I shine—
Oh, 'tis a very Paradise
This dear retreat of mine!

Robert Allison Hood.