

he had the one a few months before. He was sitting in his own room, and the window looked out on the back porch. The old gentleman rose and noiselessly lowered the window sash.

October tenth was the senior Mr. Vane's birthday. He was seventy years old on that day. When he came out to breakfast he found a bunch of scarlet carnations at his plate, also a new book.

'Many pleasant returns, Uncle,' was Mrs. Vane's greeting, and the children echoed the gracious words.

There was an unwonted look of gentleness on Mr. Vane's wrinkled face as he glanced round the little circle.

'Thank you, one and all. I have heard it said that when a man had lived three-score and ten years, and his life was still prolonged, that he was living on the Lord's time. Today I begin on his time, and I must spend it well.'

He addressed himself to his breakfast and did not speak again, save in response to some question. The meal was finished, and Julian Vane started to rise from the table. His uncle motioned him to wait.

'Stay a moment, Julian. I am going to celebrate my seventieth birthday in an unusual manner, at least unusual for me. I will don the rose-colored glasses of which I have heard so much in the past few weeks.'

There was a moment of wondering silence. It was broken by Violet who smiled up in the face of her kinsman.

'I am so glad, Uncle Luther! You will enjoy looking through them.'

'I think so, child.' His tone was slow and contemplative. For a moment he sat looking absently out of the window to where on a sloping hillside near a group of maples stood outlined, in golden and crimson radiance, right against the soft blue sky. Then he turned his gaze to those sitting at the table.

'Already I see the beauty and loving selfishness in this home. It is good because it is of God. My glasses have a dark side, the one turned to the wearer. I see the mistake of my life. Money means little unless it is used to help on the good to be found in the lives of others. Few years are left me to recompense for the many I have wasted, but I will improve the few. Julian, here are the deeds of the house and the mill. The third paper gives you the money to make the improvements you have long desired.'

Julian Vane would have spoken, but his uncle silenced him with a wave of his hand.

'Let me finish. Violet is to enter the State University as soon as she pleases. Maurice shall continue his lessons, and Margie shall commence under a good teacher, with a new piano, too. There, there, child. Let music keep your life pure and simple, that is all I ask. Thomas's turn shall come in good time. As for you, my dear,' turning to Mrs. Vane, 'you shall have help and then you can give me part of your time. I am going to turn my glasses on the outside world, and you must help me see the good that I can assist on its way.'

It was some time before any of the family could utter aught but broken words of gratitude. Once more Violet found her voice first.

'Bless the rose-colored glasses. The best thanks we can give you, Uncle Luther, is to help you induce others to wear them.'

Expiring Subscriptions.

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is Oct., it is time that the renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance.

Simple Jack's Lesson.

(Grace Stebbing, in the 'Sunday at Home.')

CHAPTER I.—A BAD SEASON.

Every one who has been for any length of time in a fishing hamlet, knows the significance of the short sentence: 'A bad season.' It is no exaggeration at all to say that the absence of the profitable shoals from our shores, for a season, frequently means the loss of the lives of many of the hapless women and children, from the bitter privations and sore straits to which they are reduced.

Anybody endowed with a pair of intelligent eyes could see a grey cloud, as it were, hanging over the whole of Breeze Point.

The fishermen had gathered no harvest from the deep; their wives had no money in the housekeeping purses; the children starved on the mockery of meals, and shivered through the keen blasts and biting frosts, in their worn-out clothes. Clothes only fit for the patchwork to which the mothers had destined them, when hopes were yet high for 'A good season.'

The shops in the little town told their own share of the grave tale.

In the grocer's shop the dust lay thick upon the little tins of mustard, on the pickle jars and jam pots. The pennies had gone freely enough for such inducements to appetite in the past, but starvation fare includes few condiments.

The chief luxury that the grocer's window displayed during these weeks was a piled up heap of broken biscuits, some not so clean as they might be, all of them the refuse accumulation of months past. Now or never, the worthy man well knew, was the time to dispose of this portion of his merchandise.

Twopence a pound might even now tempt some of the customers who have been wont to patronize his boxes of crisp 'Alberts' and 'Colonials,' and ginger nuts.

In the baker's window big dusty loaves, self-proclaimed 'seconds,' had usurped the beforetime show of daintily white fancy bread and buns. The aspect of the small general draper's dimmed the eyes of a passer-by possessed of sympathy and quick wits.

The coarsest of coarse hollands and flannels, and rough serges, with nothing better to brighten the windows than a roll or two of scarlet and crimson ribbons much the worse for past sun and time, and some sprays and bunches of dishevelled artificial flowers at which bright eyes would have looked scorn, and pretty lips would have curled contemptuously that time last year, when fathers, brothers, husbands and lovers had come home with purses full and free hands.

But even in the hamlet of Breeze Bay there were gradations. When an extra bad season came, all were poor, even the tradesmen who sold so little, and had to sell even that on credit almost as often as on the 'cash system,' which figured so conspicuously on the heading of their bills. Even the clergyman felt the hard pinch, who had no extra shillings coming in for marriages, as usual at that season of the year. He had to wear his old shoes cobbled to the point of painfulness, instead of having enough money to buy the comfortable stout new ones he had been hoping for, good patient man.

But below the poor there were the very poor. Of these latter the saddest were widow Gregory and her half-witted son. Widow Gregory was over-seventy years of age, but an honest will accomplished, even yet, what strength might scarcely have managed now, and when prosperity reigned around, many a

day's washing at home and abroad the upright old woman did for busy mothers, or sometimes for idle or pleasure-loving housewives, who easily spent what seemed to them as they stayed at home ease, so easily and pleasantly come by.

'Just sitting in a boat, and letting the fish catch themselves,' as one foolish young wife said one thoughtless day.

At such plentiful times half-witted Jack earned his own bread, and clothing, too, quite easily. He was as strong as a lion, as the saying goes, could haul up boats, and push them out single-handed, where three men might struggle over the work, without him. He was quite knowing at sorting fish, and could even be trusted to go round seiling on a boat he knew. In fact there were heaps of little things of all kinds upon which he could be well employed in the cheerful stress of an abundant sea-harvest.

But when takes were small, and money so scarce, 'Daft Jack's' somewhat uncertain services were the first to be dispensed with, and the only act of friendliness shown to the poor fellow was the bestowal of an occasional mug of ale that helped still further to muddle the beclouded brain, and help towards the mother's heartbreak, and increase of trouble in her saddened home.

It is needless to say that few and far between were the hours of out-of-home employment that widow Gregory was called upon to perform, at this time, while the poor faded ribbons were making their shabby show in Mr. Tape's windows. Her neighbors had no money to spare to pay for work they could do themselves, or—leave undone.

Jack's long, loose limbs began to bend under him, and a stoop of the shoulders to show itself, while the wandering eyes grew pitiful as those of an animal that is in a state of discomfort and suffering it cannot understand. Jessy Wing's own pretty eyes grew dim as they met Jack's starved, piteous gaze.

Jessy had only come to the hamlet some eighteen months ago as a young bride. Sam Wing had married on a special tide of prosperity, and life present and future had seemed to the happy young couple to be bathed in sunlight. But the next fishing had been a good deal below the average, and now, just when the advent of the bonny baby girl made extra expenses inevitable, there came this calamity of the hoped-for harvest's utter failure.

Troubles were certainly piled up just now for poor Breeze Bay. A cold, wet summer season had kept away even the few visitors who had discovered the charms of the little place, and who would come year by year and pass holiday weeks there, spending money that seemed to the simple inhabitants like wealth, and that meant many a small comfort and advantage meant for the children during the coming winter time.

Sam Wing's fine sunburnt face looked downcast enough, as he sat day in day out, making new sets to catch fish that he began to fear had deserted those coasts, or knitting his stockings with all a sailor's neat skill and to his wife's great admiration.

Sam was employed in this way beside his baby's cot when Jessy returned home from her simple marketing, and her meeting with poor Jack. She went up to her husband, bent down, and kissed him.

'Dear old man, how beautifully you do knit. "Even" isn't the word for it. What a blessing it is to have one's intellects to be sure. One cannot be too thankful for them.' Without having the clue to his wife's thought Sam nodded down at the two-months' old girlie in the cradle.