

THE DISCONTENTED FIR TREE.

BY LILLIE E. BARR.

I.

"No wonder I'm cross," said the Fir tree; "it is only beauty wins; My leaves are nothing at all but stems, sharper than needles and pins; Yet none of the trees of the forest have a trunk more straight and tall. And if I had only golden leaves I should be fairer than all."

II.

And lo! at the dawn the Fir tree shook golden leaves in the light; But it was stripped of its golden leaves, to its topmost branch, ere night; And it moan'd and sigh'd to the midnight skies, "Oh Moon! Oh Stars! Alas! I ought to have thought of the greed of men:—would that my leaves were glass!"

III.

And there was a will behind the wish, and so in the morning it stood Flashing the sunlight from crystal leaves—a glory to all the wood; And up and down in the leafy glades you could hear a whisper stir. For the oaks, and elms, and beeches, too, were talking about the Fir.

IV.

But just about mid-day clouds grew black, and the wind call'd for the rain; Branches and leaves were clasp'd together, and the Fir tree moan'd in pain: "I never had wished for crystal leaves, if I had a storm foreseen; Oh, for leaves like the maple tree, only more tenderly green!"

V.

And she had her wish, for never a tree shook leaves so soft and sweet; But alas! and alas! and grasshoppers soon found they were good to eat. They stripped the branches from first to last, bare as the sand below; And the Fir tree stood in the evening lights naked all in her woe.

VI.

And all that night in the silent wood the desolate Fir tree sigh'd; "Oh, for the dark, stiff needles again, better than all beside! Oh, for my spiky, dark green points, and the pleasant gloom they made! And the little birds that every night slept in my guarded shade!"

VII.

And lo! at the earliest dawning was heard through the forest ways A tremulous sigh of gladness, a little whisper of praise; And the Fir tree stood in its own fair dress, spiky, and green, and dim, A linné upon the topmost branch singing her morning hymn.

THE TYPICAL NEW YORK SHOP GIRL.

The typical New York shop girl is unique in many ways, and is as unlike the Brooklyn, Philadelphia or Boston shop girl as the blackberry differs from the strawberry. Her speech, dress, habits and mode of living are peculiar to herself. It is estimated that in New York alone about 10,000 girls earn their living as shop girls. They are generally of Irish-American or German parentage, and attend the public schools up to the age of fifteen, or perhaps sixteen, and then enter a store. Here they remain, first serving at a small notion counter, and, if bright and capable, soon rise to the lace or flower-room. As a general thing these girls are good looking, and some of them are really beautiful, with arched insteps and long taper fingers, that many a millionaire's daughter, standing on the other side of the counter, may well envy. They also dress neatly, some of them in excellent taste, their hair being especially noticeable. So many fashionable women complain that as soon as a becoming way of wearing the hair is known every shop girl in the city catches at it. And why should she not? If she cannot make herself beautiful by rich attire, she certainly deserves credit for trying to appear as pretty as possible. Almost all of them wear the hair in the langry fashion; that is, twisted in a small knot at the nape of the neck with a curled bang in front, although many still cling to the straight bang, which gives a not highly refined countenance a bold look. Their complexions are good, though pale from indoor confinement, and very few use paint or powder.

Most shop girls have very sharp tongues and quick tempers, and woe betide the fidgety or hard-to-please shopper. Many timid ladies are actually afraid of shop girls, and quake in their boots while asking in a meek voice to be allowed to see some lace. Then the girl wanted to know "how wide, what kind, what price," etc., instead of delighting the heart of the shopper by bringing down all the lace in the store and letting her choose her yard or two from it. The affability of a shop girl and her willingness to show and give opinions on her wares, will bring her a sure trade, and has more to do with the popularity of a store than any other one thing.

New York shop girls are divided into two classes. One class who think they are sadly abused creatures, and that every lady who sits down at their counter is their natural enemy, and therefore should be treated with as little courtesy as policy will allow. This class of girls are loud in their talk as well as exceedingly slangy, and one hears such vulgarisms as "Oh, what a cheek," "Do you hear the talk of that one?" "Cash, hurry up or I'll box your ears," etc. They are fond of walking in Sixth avenue and flirting, and use much bandoline on their hair; seldom have clean finger nails or teeth.

The other class are girls of considerable refinement, who are dainty about themselves, pay a great deal of attention to keeping the hands white and the collars and cuffs irreproachable, copy the manners and expressions of their most elegant customers, study the arts of pleasing and patience and keep far aloof from the other class of girls. The two classes heartily defeat each other, the first named referring to the latter class as "them girls who try to put on airs," and the latter elevating their chins when passing the former to show their utter disdain.

Both classes are warm-hearted and loyal to their companions when in trouble. They have their quarrels like all other girls, generally about lead pencils, account books or some girl's carelessness in folding up or putting into place goods recently displayed. They are also great critics, and talk freely among themselves of the actions of the proprietor and his managers. Any partiality is quickly noticed, and a prejudice against a floor-walker or other dignitary is quickly formed, whether for liking or not liking, and held to against all odds.

A New York shop girl can tell a would-be lady from a real lady as truly as any old Irish woman who has lived with the "quality." Many of the ordinary classes of shop girls marry, but the majority of the better class remain single, because the men they marry are not refined enough for them, and the men that they would marry never ask them.

A stranger would oftentimes find it difficult to distinguish our shop girl from our fashionable belle, but there is something indefinable about a New York shop girl that to a New Yorker distinguishes her from all other classes.

HIDE AND HORN FURNITURE.

In the Spanish sections of North and South America, the first thing which strikes the stranger about the household is the picturesque and unique furniture of native manufacture. There are some objects of factory make, imported, but these are more for show than use. The staple furniture of a Spanish-American house is a part of the country itself. You suspend your sombrero (broad brimmed hat) at the door on a hat rack made of the straight stem of a mimosa or some other rough barked tree, with polished horns for pegs. You rest your saddle bags on a stool made of bamboo or unbarked branches, with a seat of rawhide, the hairy side out. Your host receives you, rising from an arm-chair constructed of three splendid bull's horns fastened to a rough cylinder of wood, with rawhide stretched between the horns to form the seat and arms. The abundance of cattle in these countries has brought the ingenuity of the natives into exercising itself to utilize the products of the herds, and the result is the various forms of domestic furniture. A peculiarity of all Spanish-American furniture is the absence of metal in its construction. Wooden pegs are used instead of nails to fasten the horns to the wood, but the manufacturer appears to have a rooted objection even to the use of these. He relies principally on the leathern thongs with which he sews and ties everything together. And even his knots are peculiar. They are never the hard knots we commonly use, but an intertwisting of the thong or cord, such as is popular with sailors. These knots or twists vary with the countries in which they are found. Knots used in Southern California, Arizona and New Mexico are different from those of old Mexico, while in Central or South America nearly every State has a different method of making them. But wherever or however the furniture is made, it is very durable.

ANIMALS IN NORWAY.

A writer in the London Times says: "There is a salient feature in the Norwegian character which ought to be recorded—viz., kindness to domestic animals, which in that country are treated as the friends rather than the slaves of man. As a result, vicious horses are unknown; foals follow their dams at work in the fields or on the road as soon as they have sufficient strength, and thus gently accustom themselves to harness. Horses are trained to obey the voice rather than the hand, bearing reins are not used, and the whip, if carried at all, is scarcely ever made use of. Great care is taken not to overload carts, especially in the case of young horses, and, consequently, a broken knee is rarely seen, and the animals continue fat, in good condition and capable of work till the advanced age of twenty-five or thirty. So tame are the Norwegian horses and cows that they will allow casual passersby to caress them while they are lying down. Even domestic cats will approach a boy with confidence, knowing that no chasing or worrying awaits them. One very hot Summer's day I met a woman holding up an umbrella to carefully screen what I supposed was a little child at her side from the scorching rays of a mid day sun, while her own head was covered only by a handkerchief. In driving by I tried to gain a glimpse of her charge, and found, to my surprise, that the object of her care was a fat, black pig. The question of humane methods of slaughtering animals has lately been prominently brought forward in England. In this the Norwegians show us a good example—they never use the knife without first stunning the animal. In the above remarks I am alluding to the country districts of Norway; in the towns the national characteristics become modified even though under these conditions kindness to animals is still remarkable."

WHEN CROOK WAS A CAPTIVE.

"Gath" writes: "Crook entered West Point in 1848, so that he is, I judge, about 51 years old. He was put out in California as soon as he graduated, and served at once against the Indians, whom he has now known for thirty years. He was wounded with an arrow about twenty-five years ago. The rebellion called him away from eight years of Indian encounters to the contest of civilized forces, and he began in West Virginia, was wounded there, was promoted for gallant services in Antietam, then served in the western armies at the head of a division of cavalry, was at Chickamauga, broke up the guerillas, went on several raids, served under Sheridan, and was taken prisoner by his subsequent brother-in-law most inhospitably at Cumberland, but very soon released. He was in all Sheridan's great battles, commanded all the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac for a while, and was in the big pursuit to Appomattox. When I saw him last he was a long, lean man loosely put together, with a rather shy, strange face, as if he had partly turned into an Indian. He is an Ohio boy. Anything wild seems tame to Crook. He wants no friends, and can do with very little family. During the war he became much interested in Mary Dailey, a young lady of good family living in western Maryland, but from Virginia people living about Moorefield. Her people sympathized with the South, and she had a brother a member of McNeill's semi-guerrilla band. This young scapegrace, finding that Gen. Crook and Gen. Kelly stopped at his father's hotel in Cumberland—the former paying attention to his sister—slipped into that hotel and captured the two generals in the midst of their troops, forced them out of their lines at the very point of the pistol, and took them to Richmond. Crook was then released, probably through the intercession of his captor. He afterward married Miss Dailey, and she has been with him in a good many strange places in the West. His young captor afterward became a sutler at his camp."

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

LONDON, July 23.

It is expected that the net proceeds of the Savage Club fête will amount to upwards of £2,000.

It is reported that a company has been formed in New York to lay two more cables to Europe. This will be good news if true.

The subscriptions to the Clyde disaster are hanging fire. £40,000 is needed for 120 families; but the Clyde is so far away from London that the charitable public in the city do not seem to have been moved.

In the course of the Corrupt Practices Bill it was stated that the cost of the last general election was two millions and a half. Dear, looking at the result, though comparatively cheap as regards other general elections.

MME. PATTI is to have rather more than £1,000 a night during her American engagement. The money is to be lodged in the bank for her before she sings a note. Note for note is the maxim that governs the transaction.

AMERICA seems to be sending herself to England just now. The number of senators and men of distinction whom Mr. Puleston is called upon night after night, as the member for America, to see round the House, is astonishing.

LADY POLLOCK states in her sketch of the career of Sims Reeves that the great tenor's pecuniary losses from his inability to fulfil engagements have amounted to the sum of nearly £70,000. She alleges that an irritable mucous membrane has been the sole cause of his frequently disappointing the public.

ONE of the ideas prevalent at the clubs is that Mr. Childers will resign if the Suez Canal Bill is not passed. The public will not appreciate and accept this self-sacrifice of one for the many; all ought to share the responsibility of an act which we know has been studied and approved at Cabinet Councils.

THE idea we broached as a joke at the expense of the iron duke's caricature, namely, that it should be melted down, is likely to come to pass. The proposal now is to recast the statue into "another statue." It does not mention if the statue is to be of the duke or some one else.

THE humor of the Estate Exchange is of a somewhat grim order. Certain land near London, it was observed, has ponds of water upon it which depreciate its value. This led to a suggestion that in many places such cavities were valuable as "shoots," persons being often willing to pay for the privilege of getting rid of refuse material. "And there are other places where you can get 'shoots' for nothing" was the unexpected retort which met an ingenious baronet and sometime Lord Mayor—"go to Ireland."

AMONG the oddities of journalism of which this age has surely a bountiful supply, is a competition for the discovery of the ugliest man in the kingdom. The *Sporting Times* is the paper desirous, by means of votes, of ascertaining who is its ugliest customer.

THE American team are to be entertained at a banquet at the Criterion, in the week following the Wimbledon meeting. A most influential committee has been formed to conduct the affair, having at its head the Duke of Teck, General M'Murdo, the Earl of Wemyss and March, Sir Henry Wilmot, Sir Henry Halford, Earl Brownlow, and other leading noblemen and gentlemen.

OUR Scotch denizens in London—who are proverbially the most modest of men—are highly elated at the success of their countrymen at Wimbledon, and they may be excused at the elation they feel under the circumstances, for they have, ever since Wimbledon became the scene of the annual rifle tournament, come well to the front, and never better so than this year.

POOR Dr. Kenealy has not lived to witness the triumph of his daughter, who seems to have inherited much of her father's wonderful talent. It is announced that Miss Arabella Kenealy, second daughter of the late barrister, on Thursday took her degree in the College of Physicians, Dublin, coming out first in order of merit over the fifty candidates competing.

MR. SPURGEON leaves London for Scotland for a short vacation. The Tabernacle is to be closed for repairs, and on his return he has arranged to conduct for a few weeks his services in Exeter Hall. His Sunday morning sermons are still telegraphed to America, and over one million copies printed there every Monday.

THE state of private business in the House of Commons is such that the corridors, in which are situated the committee-rooms, are practically deserted. There are literally no committees now sitting upon matters of public importance or upon private bills which are much contested.

THE Hamilton Palace Library proves to be of much more value than the Sunderland Library, although the latter realized upwards of £50,000. Thus far the Hamilton Palace Library (Beckford's) has produced £67,000, and a large portion still remains to be sold. When the sale is completed it is expected that the total will amount to £80,000.

THERE is an intention, on the part of one of the Ministers, to make all the young gentlemen in his office shave off their moustaches. He considers it is fast and also too military. "Hards off, sir, of that beautiful and healthy embellishment of the male physiognomy. Know you not that it was won for Englishmen all by Charles Dickens, together with the beard, upon the principle that hair about the mouth and under the nose acts as a respirator?"

THE Lord Mayor of London will entertain Her Majesty's Ministers at the Mansion House on Wednesday, August the 8th. The occasion will be looked forward to with even more than usual interest in consequence of the recent phases of high policy with which the public have become acquainted, and in regard to which they have shown an inconveniently inquisitive turn of mind.

MUCH regret is felt among his fellow colleagues in the Fisheries Exhibition at the serious and sudden illness of Mr. Francis Francis, truly named "the Isaak Walton of the day," who is down with a stroke of paralysis, at his residence, the Firs, Twickenham. Apart from his being so well known and accepted an authority on angling and fish, Mr. Francis Francis's bluff, hearty manner and generous disposition has endeared him to many friends.

A SONNET by the Earl of Rosslyn, which we quote, will be appreciated by the volunteers:—

"DEFENCE, NOT DEFIANCE.
"We did not fly to arms in idle boast
To show fine stalwart forms in fancy dress,
To grasp a useless sabre, or to hold
A rifle in vain show, in emptiness.
We armed—still arm to guard our sacred coast
And in defence the gentle hearts grow bold.
Thus, a free State, free soldiers send to fight,
'Aye, ready!' and in earnest, when the vaunts
Of jealous neighbors overstep the right,
And eager preparation backs their taunts—
Then leap the youth of Britain from their rest,
And swear no stranger shall their homes molest;
E'en tenderest birds, provoked, grow brave in blood,
Beat back the invader, and defend their brood."

SILVER CREEK, N.Y., Feby. 6, 1880.

GENTS—I have been very low, and have tried everything, to no advantage. I heard your Hop Bitters recommended by so many, I concluded to give them a trial. I did, and now am around, and constantly improving, and am nearly as strong as ever.

W. H. WELLER.