

Poetry.

ON THE MORROW.

I envy not my lord his lands,
His timbers on a thousand acres,
While I have stalwart heart and hands
To plough life's main and stomp its breakers;

I envy not my lord his herds,
Emblazoned wide in herald's pages—
His proud descent of Norman date,
Or earlier barbaric ages—

I envy not my lord his gold;
It cannot buy one solid pleasure,
Nor eke out Nature's copyhold
When death comes in to take our measure;

That ancient heirloom is the best
Which nothing gains by brick or mortar;
That rank will stand the longest test
No college on our shield can quarter;

Tales and Sketches.

TAKING IT FOR GRANTED.

With marks of rough, stormy life all over him,
a man of about fifty years, gray and sunburnt,
sat in my office. I found him there when I went,
in one morning not long ago.

"Here is somebody waiting for you, Elwell," said Mr. Bigelow.
I looked around, and the man rose and held out his hand.
"Averill—my name is Averill," said he,
looking sharply at me out of a pair of shrewd gray eyes.

"No," replied Mr. Averill. "We were of the same name, but not connected—unless it may be very distantly. I used to know her and her folks, though, as well as I did my own sisters, and better, too. Let's see—where is your Aunt Augusta now?"

"Very well when we heard last. Aunt Augusta has good children and a pleasant home, and seems quite happy."
"Um-m-m! That is nice," said Mr. Averill, fumbling at a rough nugget of gold that hung as a charm from his watch chain.

"Mother!" said I, breaking in upon her song. "Come in the other room. An old friend of yours wants to see you."
Mother looked up over her glasses. "An old friend? 'Tisn't any of the Maine folks, is it?" she asked.

"Because, if it was so much as a dog that had trotted across a corner of the State of Maine, on his four legs, mother would have run, with her arms out and a smile of welcome, without stopping to even wash the dough off her hands. As it was, with only an indefinite thought of seeing 'an old friend,' she went, with a dust of flour on her nose, and without her company cap.

As soon as she had stepped inside the sitting-room door, she stood and looked at her guest, and he stood and looked at her. "It is Sam, as true as you are born!" she said, at last.
Then they both laughed, and then they both wiped their eyes, though they didn't seem like that sort of people, especially Mr. Averill.

I never knew mother to forget her house-keeping before, but this time she let the biscuits burn till they were as black as my shoe;
and when she mixed more she put in sugar instead of salt, and left out the saleratus altogether.
But her cheeks grew pink, and her capstrings flew, and she nor her guest seemed to know the difference.

roses. So if anybody had neglected to look at them before, they looked then.
Among those who were obedient to the ministerial forefinger was Abner Stanton, the village blacksmith!

"Oh, honey!" cried my mother, hopping up from the tea-table as soon as she was seated. "You haven't lost your sweet tooth, have you, Sam?"
"How you do remember! returned Sam, admiringly.

"I should think I ought to," answered my mother, with a girlish laugh. "The way you used to pick up walnuts to carry to the cross-roads store and trade for molasses and make candy of! Speaking of the roads store, I wonder if you know our old storekeeper's daughter, she that was Sarah Curley, has lost her husband?"

"No, has she? Strange I never heard of it," replied Mr. Averill, appearing as astonished as though he had been hearing from his old neighbors every week.
"Yes," said my mother. "She married one of old Si Seaver's boys, the oldest one, Jonathan, and he died suddenly,—all at once; well, it must be something like half-a-dozen years ago,—and left his wife and so many children—five children or else six, I don't know which."

"You don't say!" ejaculated Mr. Averill, passing his honey plate for the third time. No, evidently he had not lost his sweet tooth.
After supper, mother washed up the dishes and talked, and Mr. Averill smoked his pipe and listened. It was the first time I ever allowed anybody to smoke in my house, but I had nothing to say now. I even filled his pipe and lighted it for him. And then he told the story of his life, which had been full of strange and interesting adventures. He was evidently a man who did not read much and who could not have written well, but he could talk; not always grammatically, perhaps, but always with force and fascination.

It seemed that years and years ago, his father and my father's father lived in a town in the valley of the Kennebec. My mother's father was a large farmer and Mr. Averill's father was a very small farmer with a very large family. So his youngest son, Sam, came to work for my grandfather. My mother and my aunt Augusta were young girls—they were twins, and I suppose by the way they look now that they must have been pretty then. My mother was early engaged and married to my father; but there was Augusta, and there was Sam; and where one was you might usually find the other near at hand. Sam never said anything, he was not of a demonstrative kind, but he knew how he felt, and he supposed Augusta knew too.

So the year budded and blossomed and brought forth fruit, until at last Sam was down to Connecticut to take charge of a saw-mill for an uncle of his. He wrote to Aunt Augusta and Aunt Augusta wrote to him; and now and then he came to Maine on business, always going to my grandfather's before he went home, and carrying himself towards Augusta like an accepted lover.

After a few years he found himself possessed of twelve thousand dollars, and immediately went west to spend it. He went abroad, to England and Rome and Egypt and Paris and Germany and Sweden and Russia and everywhere. When he came home at last it was with only fifty dollars in pocket. So next he went out among the copper mines of Lake Superior, and in time was again possessed of twelve thousand dollars.

"Now I will come home and marry Augusta, and settle down," said he to himself. But he didn't say it to anybody else. It never occurred to him that was necessary.
Meantime my Aunt Augusta had not stood like a rose in a pot, waiting for the gardener to come and pick it. She cast out her root and threw up the branches and bloomed as though it was enough to fulfill the laws of being and beauty for their own sakes.

In that simple neighborhood work was supposed to be the chief end of everybody. So Aunt Augusta learned vest-making, and then she went to Coos, where her brother Nathan lived, and set up for herself.
Coos was a little crumb of a town in those days; but it held up its head and had its stores, and its mills, and its shops, and its great white meeting-house on a hill, with galleries on three sides and square pews and a high box pulpit.

The first Sunday after Augusta went there, she climbed the hill, of course, and went in the front pew with Uncle Nathan and his wife. She was fashionably dressed in a black crape gown, a scarlet shawl, and a white silk bonnet with pink roses inside. Her cheeks were as pink as her roses, and her eyes were as black as her gown.

There was no need that Mr. Keller should point her out to the young men, but he took the pains to do it. Mr. Keller, the minister, was a little lank man, as plain and gray as a door bug, and so afraid of the poms and vanities that he wouldn't wear buttons on his coat. No sooner had his eyes fallen on Aunt Augusta, settling herself in the front pew, like a variegated tulip, than he dropped the subject he had started upon for his sermon, and began to preach against conformity to the world. He was a sincere, earnest man, and he preached with all his might, emphasizing and illustrating his words by pointing with his blunt finger at the scarlet shawl and pink

roses. So if anybody had neglected to look at them before, they looked then.
Among those who were obedient to the ministerial forefinger was Abner Stanton, the village blacksmith!

Abner Stanton's heart was a good deal like his iron—not easily melted—but when once it had been hammered into a shape, there it was, fixed and steadfast. And to-day Aunt Augusta's eyes went right through it like red hot arrows as he peered around at her from behind one of the pillars in the gallery.
The next day he came to get a vest made. The day after, he came to bring the buttons for it; and the day after that, he thought, as he was going by, he would call and see if she had everything she needed, and how soon the vest would be done. It was not two days more before he was there again to bring a letter.

"I happened to see it at the post office when I went after my paper, and so I brought it along. I could as well as not," said he.
The letter was from Sam Averill, telling about the luck he had had in mining, the weather, and the fact that he was well.—Nothing more; nothing about the home he was building in his fancy, and the figure that was always central in his thoughts.

"I hope," said my uncle Nathan, "you are not foolish enough to set your mind on such a rolling stone as Sam Averill. He has no continuity to him."
"If we are going to hunt for a man that has no faults in this world, we'll have a long road of it," returned Aunt Augusta, beaving down the heavy pressing iron upon her seam as though she were trying to crush the life out of something.

In less than a week, Abner Stanton called again. He thought perhaps Miss Augusta didn't know the swamp-pinks were out, and so he brought her a handful, that he got on the way over from Cowesett.
Aunt Augusta had a weakness for flowers—she and my mother are alike about that—and she put a cluster of the blossoms in her hair or once, and another at her throat, while Abner Stanton looked at her with admiration in every hair of his head.

"If you were a sister of mine, you should always sit in a rocking-chair and wear swamp-pinks," said he.
"Abner Stanton is a most excellent man," quoth Uncle Nathan, when he had gone his way, "an esquire and a head man in town. He's all wheat and no chaff. He'll make a first rate husband, and the girl who gets him will get a prize."

Aunt Augusta made some fierce clippings with her great tailor's shears, but she said nothing, and presently went up stairs to answer Sam Averill's letter.
The next day Abner Stanton called to see Uncle Nathan on business, and she sent her letter to the office by him. So the months drifted along one after another like pictures in a magic lantern. Abner Stanton came often on one excuse or another, or on none. He brought flowers and berries strung on grass, and sweet flag-root and bird's eggs. He was never intrusive with his love, but he made Aunt Augusta conscious of it every step she walked and with every breath she breathed. It was below her, above her, and all around her. He often brought her letters from Sam, and carried hers for him to the office.

"All things are fair in love," said he to himself. So now and then he forgot to mail; or to deliver one, dropping it in the fire instead. At last as his love grew hotter and impatient, he kept them back altogether, and still never allowed Aunt Augusta to lose sight or thought of himself.

Thus the time passed, until Sam Averill, having made and lost and made again his twelve thousand dollars among the copper mines, came home to "marry Augusta and settle down."
Suddenly one day he appeared before my Uncle Nathan, travel worn, and brown and shaggy. My uncle received him with great cordiality.

"Sam, I am glad to see you!" said he. "How have you fared all this great long time?"
"Fair to middling. Where's Augusta?" returned Sam.
"O, Augusta! She is all right. You go to the tavern and fix up, and I'll find Augusta. I will be around in an hour or so and call for you. Augusta will be proper glad to see you, and so will the rest of the folks. I don't know when there was such a surprise in Coos before."

So Sam went off with his honest heart to find a razor and a wash-bowl, and my Uncle didn't see him again. He went straight to Abner Stanton.
"Abner," said he, going into the smithy out of breath, "Sam Averill has come, and you must go right up and get Augusta to name the day, or you will lose her. I'll keep him out of the way as long as I can."

Abner dropped his hammer, without saying a word, and went up the street, rolling down his shirt-sleeves as he went. An hour after Uncle Nathan came home with Sam Averill.
"Here is an old friend you will be glad to see, Augusta," said he, opening the door of my aunt's workroom, where she sat stitching the pocket of a primrose colored vest, and looking fresh as a hundred primroses herself. "It is Sam," said she faintly, starting to her feet and dropping her work.

It was Sam. Sam came at last, with his long-smouldering love and his tardy speaking.
"You are too late! An hour too late," said my Aunt Augusta, when he had told his errand East. "I have just engaged myself to another man."

"You haven't done right, Augusta," said Sam. "You belong to me; you have always belonged to me, and you ought to have waited till I came."
"You didn't say anything," returned my aunt, with a little pride. "How was I to know what you meant? You never spoke a word."

"I took it you knew my mind," returned Sam. "I never thought of anybody else. I never should think of anybody else, and it didn't occur to me you would. You must marry this person now you have promised him, of course. But it isn't right, and it never will be right."

"Mr. Stanton is a worthy man; just as good as gold, clear through to the core. I have always liked him, and you never said anything," repeated my poor Aunt Augusta, "I will be your friend, though, just the same."
They said no more; there was nothing more to be said, and in a month Aunt Augusta and Abner Stanton were married. Sam Averill stayed till after the wedding, and then he went off, and had never been heard off again until to-day by Aunt Augusta's family.

He went to California, throwing his whole life into work; his work prospered, and he had come back now with houses and lands and gold and mines—a rich man. He had come back to find Aunt Augusta, and learn how the world had fared with her. For in all these years of buying and selling and getting gain, he kept the empty room in his heart that had once been filled by his love.
Aunt Augusta's married life had not been happy. It is very dangerous for a man to take in a mean habit temporarily, for it will stick to him, and Abner Stanton's character never recovered from the twist those intercepted letters gave it. I don't know what, but something was always going wrong between them. Even their children proved barriers instead of bonds. As he grew older, his natural economy and thrift grew stronger and stronger, until as my mother said, "he got so close he could sit, and seven more like him, on a three cent piece." Finally one day, under some provocation, he told Aunt Augusta about the lost letters.

"You oughtn't to have told me that Abner," said she. "You ought not to have told me. I can never forgive you."
She never did. Always after, there seemed to be something separating them, cold and hard and transparent as ice, until at last they agreed to live apart. And so they did until the death of Mr. Stanton. Now Aunt Augusta was living surrounded by her children and grand-children, happy and comfortable.

Mother brought down thus the story of Augusta's life, while Mr. Averill listened, eager and excited? When she had finished, he knocked the ashes from his pipe, and starting up began to walk the floor.
"I will start for Portland to-morrow morning, and see what Augusta will have to say to me. I am of the same mind I always was. I've never hankered for a moment after any other woman, and I am as ready to marry her to-day as ever I was."

So the next day I saw him on the Portland train, gray with years, but youthful with expectation.
This time he did not waste his opportunity to make himself fine, but with the grim and dust of travel yet upon him, he went directly to the house of Aunt Augusta's daughter, with whom she is living.
"Where is Mrs. Stanton? I want to see her right away," said he, as soon as the door was opened.

"You will find her here; walk in, if you please," replied the housemaid throwing open the door of the sitting-room.
Mr. Averill stepped quickly forward. Yes, there she sat, stitching away as before on some kind of primrose colored stuff, with her eyes as black and bright as ever. But the primroses were faded in her cheeks, and she wore a cap on her head.
"I have come for you again, Augusta. Am I too late this time?" cried the impatient lover.
The roses came back to Aunt Augusta's cheek, and the red hot arrows shot out of her eyes once more.
"Bless us! If it isn't Sam Averill, nose and all!" she said, holding up her hands.
From twenty to fifty is but as a watch in the night, when the years are past; and it is only when an old lady nods triumphantly at you from the looking glass, saying: "Here I am, my dear!" or when children that you have nursed in your arms come around with the rights and duties of full grown men and women, that you remember that one is no longer young at fifty. But the sight of Sam Averill's gray hairs and wrinkles were as good as a looking-glass to remind Aunt Augusta.

have ever soon seemed like a tallow candle beside the sun when I think of you. I have made my fortune, and all I want now is you to come and share it with me. It is you, or nobody, just as it always was."

Maybe Aunt Augusta's heart throbbed a little with the old yearning toward the love of her youth, but she shook her head with unhesitating decision, as she put out her hand to stir the cradle where her youngest grand-child lay asleep.
"Can't you see, Sam," said she. "I won't deny that it was all a mistake my marrying Stanton. He didn't turn out to be the man I took him for. He proved contrary and cornery, and besides he wrote letters in disguise. But that is all over and past, and can't be undone. And now I am in the midst of my children with my grandchildren grown up about me, and I am in my right place. I shouldn't be contented to leave everything to go off to a new country to begin the world over again, as it were. I am too old an oak to be transplanted.

Well, after that, Mr. Averill might have talked till he was at the age of Methuselah. Aunt Augusta had made up her mind, and an earthquake could not shake it.
So Mr. Averill went away alone.
"Well, Amelia, Augusta wouldn't have a word to say to me," said he, walking in upon mother and me as we sat at supper a few evenings after, "not a word."

"I want to know if that is so!" cried mother, fluttering up after another plate and knife. "Lay your overcoat right off and sit by and have a cup of tea with us. Augusta always was decided, and you couldn't turn her after she got her mind fixed. She wouldn't keep you waiting long for your answer, either. Well, it is likely it is for the best; we will hope so," pursued mother, reaching over to put an extra lump of sugar in Mr. Averill's cup, as though to sweeten life if possible for him.

"It serves me right in taking it for granted that Augusta understood my intentions. I must have been a self-conceited inconsiderate fool. But it seems hard that a body can't work his way out of a blunder in a whole lifetime."
Mother looked full of sympathy, and dropped another lump in Mr. Averill's cup. To my astonishment he seemed to relish it the better, as if life was growing sweeter and sweeter.

Mother and Mr. Averill sat up late that night; so late that as I had had a hard day, I went off to bed and left them talking over old times and purring away like two cats by the kitchen fire.
After breakfast the next morning, mother followed me into the hall when I started for the office.

"I want to speak with you, Elwell, just a minute," said she, stroking my coatsleeve, tremulously. "What should you say to my going back to California along with Mr. Averill?"

"You, mother!" I cried, feeling as though the world had tumbled off its axis. "Why, it is Aunt Augusta he wants. It is Augusta, or nobody!"

"Yes, so it was," returned mother, humbly, "but Sam says I seem more like Augusta, as she used to be, than she does herself. To tell you the truth, Elwell," continued my mother, humbler still, "I suppose it wouldn't have taken much to turn me toward Sam in my young days—I always thought the world and all of him; but he seemed to take rather more to Augusta. She was always nineteen to the dozen, and I never could hold my own against her. And then your father, he came along, and I never was sorry it happened as it did. But now you don't need me; and Sam and I have about concluded to make arrangements, only I told him I must have a talk with you first and get your advice."

Get my advice! Dear little mother! I was not idiotic enough to offer it if I had any advice to give. So she and Mr. Averill went on and "made arrangements."

Which arrangements were made that day two weeks, after a quiet wedding at the minister's they started off for California together, to begin life anew on each other's account, as blithe and joyous as two birds on the wing.—From the Aldine for Feb.

Little five-year-old Annie, who was suffering from a bad cold, went to pay a visit to auntie. During the day she related her various successes at school, and ended by declaring that she could read a great deal better than Sabina, who was eight years old. "Well," questioned auntie, "would it not sound better if some one else said it?" "Yes," answered Annie, with a very sober countenance, "I think it would. I have such a bad cold that I can't say it very well."

A colored man applied to a Boston Savings Bank, wishing to draw one dollar. The clerk informed him that the iron rule of the institution forbade withdrawal of less than three dollars. Our colored brother was in deep study for a few moments, and then said: "Sar, I'll take de free." The three dollars were paid to him, when he at once added: "Now, sar, if you please, sar, I'll posit two dollars in de institution." The amount was duly received and credited to the darky, who, with his loose dollars in his pocket gave the clerk a sly wink, and walked away.

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