

**The Village Blacksmith.**  
 Under a spreading chestnut tree,  
 The village smithy stands,  
 The smith, a mighty man is he,  
 With large and sinewy hands;  
 And the muscles of his brawny hands  
 Are strong as iron bands,  
  
 His hair is crisp, and black and long;  
 His face is like the tan;  
 His brow is wet with honest sweat;  
 He earns whate'er he can;  
 And looks the whole world in the face,  
 For he owes not any man.  
  
 Week in, week out, from morn till night,  
 You can hear his bellows blow;  
 You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
 With measured beat and slow,  
 Like a sexton ringing the village bell  
 When the evening sun is low.  
  
 And the children coming home from school,  
 Look in at the open door;  
 They love to see the flaming forge,  
 And hear the bellows roar,  
 And catch the burning sparks that fly  
 Like chaff from a thrashing floor.  
  
 He goes on Sunday to the church,  
 And sits among his boys;  
 He hears the parson pray and preach;  
 He hears his daughter's voice  
 Singing in the village choir,  
 And it makes his heart rejoice.  
  
 It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
 Singing to Paradise!  
 He needs must think of her once more,  
 How in the grave she lies;  
 And with his hard rough hand he wipes  
 A tear out of his eyes.  
  
 Tolling, rejoicing, sorrowing,  
 Onward through life he goes;  
 Each morning sees some task begin,  
 Each evening sees its close;  
 Something attempted, something done,  
 And he'll earn'd a night's repose.  
  
 Thanks, thanks to the my worthy friend,  
 For the lesson thou hast taught!  
 Thus at the flaming forge of life  
 Our fortunes must be wrought;  
 Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
 Each burning deed and thought.

SELECT STORY.

Sandal-Wood and Silver.

CONTINUED.

WHEN she had finished, she tore a slip of blank paper from the bottom of the page in her hand and hastily penciled—  
 "At four o'clock this afternoon. But I shall not leave him—yet."  
 Twisting this brief note, the young woman turned to the negress, who sat, too like, blinking up into her face.  
 "Auntie, said she, an old friend of mine is coming here to meet me this afternoon at four o'clock; you will see that no one interrupts us, won't you?"  
 "Yes, mist'ess, I'll take keer; but, oh, mist'ess, I's awful skeert for you—scuse me, mist'ess, but dat's so."  
 "Scared for me, Moss! exclaimed Mrs. Rathburne, indignantly; what do you mean?"  
 "Oh, mist'ess, don't you be mad; but did mas'r ever tell you 'bout his first wife?"  
 "His first wife! He never had one before me, of course."  
 "Oh, but he had, mist'ess; he had, and she died 'cause she tried to get away from him, same as dat ar genelma wants to take you away."  
 "How did she die, Moss—what killed her?"  
 "Only for a stroll. The heat is less oppressive out of doors than in the house."  
 "Is it? Well, run and dress for dinner, like a good child. I have just come home, and I'm sharp set, I assure you."  
 And turning away, Mr. Rathburne hummed a little tune, and sauntered down the lawn.  
 He suspects nothing, thought poor Rosamond, running up the steps with a heart almost light once more.  
 In her chamber she found her maid, and not a moment to much remained of the time devoted to dressing for dinner, an observance upon which Rathburne punctiliously insisted.  
 The evening passed quietly enough in the drawing-room, but more hilariously in the butler's pantry, whither Mort had invited Sooltan to taste a cordial of his own composition, and to smoke a pipe of mild tobacco.  
 Sooltan, temperate by nature, like most Orientals, had yet seen to much of the world to be shocked by either of these propositions, and, to tell the truth, had imbibed a taste for such indulgences, which he saw no necessity of denying. Mort, on the other hand, had grown up among bottles, demijohns and casks; and their contents had hardly more effect upon his seasoned brain than upon the glass or wood which held them. It is therefore not remarkable that Sooltan became communicative and Mort attentive, and that when the latter gradually and skillfully led the conversation to their young mistress, the valet allowed himself to be convicted


of holding a secret with regard to her, and finally of so nearly divulging that secret that Mort shrewdly guessed at what remained untold.  
 "Mighty curious kind o' box dat mas'r give mist'ess, said he, carelessly.  
 "Mamma made it, and Sooltan bought it for sahib, said the East Indian significantly.  
 "And if she puts de letter, or whater in dere, it'll pizen her when she goes for to take it out. Sho! I don't believe dat story."  
 "You better believe it, black man Sooltan knows."  
 "Couldn't b'lieve it without I saw it, Sooty."  
 "Come, then; all softly to the Burrasahib's room when I go to arrange his toilet. No one will come. We two will slip like the wind into the Memrasahib's room, and I will show you whether Sooltan is a liar."  
 "Come then if you darst, said Mort briefly,  
 And then the two men quietly leaving the party, stole up a back stairs, listened a moment in the upper hall to the continuous murmur of voices below stairs, and then softly entered Mr. Rathburne's room, where Sooltan, as he had intimated, had duties at that hour, and where Mort's presence would not have been very remarkable had he been discovered there. Listening and peeping about quite sure that all was safe, Sooltan glided noiselessly through the dressing room separating the two chambers, and almost immediately returned with the box in his hand.  
 "See now black man, said he cautiously. Put finger there—push so—let him side drop down so, and—  
 An inarticulate exclamation finished the sentence, and Sooltan hastily dropping the letter he was already handling closed the box, mechanically placed it upon a table, and staggered back, both hands pressed upon his forehead.  
 He has already poured in the certain death, murmured he, in his native tongue.  
 Mort could not, of course, comprehend the words, but he did the idea, and pausing only to place Sooltan upon a chair, he flew to replace the box in his mistress's chamber, and then returning, led the Indian from the rooms, and to his own lodging. Hastily depositing him upon the bed, he stood for a moment grimly watching him, his fingers dubiously fingering a little box which he had drawn from an inner pocket of his waistcoat; but finally shaking his head, he turned away, muttering:  
 "What's the use o' saving him? he ain't got no kind o' conscience—can't even keep his master's secrets."  
 And Sooltan, in those words, was doomed to die, for the poison, from whose effects Mort could have saved him, was already working in his veins.  
 When Mr. Rathburne came up to his room an hour or two later he found Mort waiting beside the toilet table to tell him that Sooltan was ill, and to offer his own services as valet. These the master negligently accepted, saying:  
 "Ah, yes, you used to be my own boy once, you know, and I suppose you have not forgotten."  
 "No, mas'r, I have not forgotten, replied the negro, quietly, and the toilet proceeded.  
 Mr. Rathburne, a luxurious man in all his habits, was fond of reading in bed, and Mort's final duty was to arrange the lamp, the stand, and the books for this recreation. This done, he said with some hesitation, Mas'r, there was a letter Sooltan found somewhere about the house, and showed it to me this afternoon, that maybe you'd like to know about. He said twas a letter from one of your old sweethearts, and he'd show it to mist'ess and get money for it.  
 "What's all that? demanded Rathburne, savagely. What has the fellow picked up? I always knew he was a traitor. What is this letter, Mort my good fellow."  
 "I don't know nuffin about writing mas'r, but when Sooltan got sick I sort o' took dat letter out he pocket and hid it, and I'll get for mas'r."  
 "Get it then. The copper-coloured scoundrel!"  
 And Mr. Rathburne clinched his hand and knit his brows in a manner very unpromising to Sooltan, should he come within the reach of either at that moment.  
 Mort, meantime, had left the room by the hall-door, and entered the dressing room by that way, having previously closed the door of communication. As he stole toward the place where he had hidden the poisoned casket, he heard his mistress anxiously exclaim:  
 "Why, Nellie, what has become of the box that stood upon this bureau to-day—the sandal wood and silver box?"  
 "My gracious, mist'ess is that box gone? began the maid, volubly; but Mort waited for no more. He had already touched the spring, slipped out the old and yellow letter with which he had an hour before replaced Musgrave's note hidden the casket again and was now

hastening towards his master's bedside.  
 Spite of the powerful antidote which he had applied, both externally and internally, the subtle poison of the casket was already seeping through his veins. But making a terrible effort, he threw off the dizzy apathy, and crossing the room, placed the paper in Rathburne's hands.  
 "Helen! Has she come from the grave to haunt me? Helen—Rosamond—Helen—  
 And Molyneux Rathburne still grasping the faded and yellow paper Mort had hoarded so many years with some indefinite design of retribution, sank back upon his pillows while the sweat of mortal pain and fear broke out upon his clammy forehead.  
 "What is this—Mort? stammered he.  
 "I'll tell you master, said the slave, grasping at a chair for support and speaking quickly and gaspingly. The letter's been in the box you pizen'd for poor lilly mist'ess letter. I've served you same as you wanted to serve her. Want to know why? You took the girl I wanted to marry, and when you was tired of her you sold her to a worse man, and she killed herself. And you killed your first wife, and you'd have killed my mother but you was afraid, and now you's going, and maybe I'll have to go too—  
 As he said the last words, Mort sank heavily upon the floor, insensible and gasping. Nelly, the maid, hearing the fall, rushed in and her screams soon aroused the family—all but two. Mr. Rathburne was not to be roused by sound or sight of this world, and Sooltan, his slave, had accompanied his master upon the longest journey they had yet undertaken together.  
 Mort recovered, thanks to the antidote with which his wise mother knowing her master's love of poisons, had long ago provided him; but it was very long before he recovered from the shock he had sustained. So soon as he was able to speak, he sent for his mistress to his bedside, and said feebly,  
 "Dat letter, mist'ess, dat one in de box, you know—  
 "Yes, Mort; what about it?"  
 "I burned it up; nobody never saw it. It was pisened to kill you, and I burned it up. It's all right now, and I don't want to say nothing more about it, if so be you'll be so 'duigent, mist'ess."  
 And Bosamond had the rare courage and generosity to let the faithful slave keep his secret then and ever. When Mort could once more move about the house, his first excursion was to his late master's dressing-room, and a few moments later the rare and wonderful and never-to-be-replaced casket was blazing in the fire Mort had caused to be kindled in his own room expressly for the purpose of its destruction.  
 Mrs. Rathburne journeyed north under the charge of her friend, Mr. Musgrave, and when her year of widowhood was over, she married him quietly, nor has either husband or wife yet seen cause to regret the hour which merged their separate lives in one.  
 The plantation and all other property of the late Mr. Rathburne was sold by his widow soon after his death, and she never has revisited the South; but Mort and his mother, old Moss, were duly provided for in the way nearest to their own hearts, and lived long and happily to bless the deliverance that came to them from Memonna's casket of Sandal wood and Silver.

BESSY HAY.

THE fragrant wild roses lifted their pink chalices up towards the sunshine and dew of the July heavens; the robins sang uproarious glees in the branches of the old apple orchard; and neither rose or robin was fairer or sweeter voiced than Bessy Hay, as she stood among the currant bushes, culling the red ripe fruit under the shade of an old pear tree, where the stone wall of the garden was draped with the emerald festoons of a wild grape vine, while Paul Estcott stood leaning against the mossy trunk of the pear tree, twisting a stem of blue-bells in his hand.  
 "I know I'm poor, Bessy, he said, resuming a conversation which had apparently lapsed into silence for a moment or so; but I suppose poor people have a right to live and be happy as well as rich ones.  
 "I suppose so too, Paul.  
 "And I am sure I am willing to work if only I could find something to do.  
 Bessy glanced deprecatingly at him, Mr. Elton wants some one to take the farm and work it—  
 "That is mere drudgery, and, besides, the pay would not enable me to marry and support a wife comfortably.  
 "We could wait, Paul.  
 "You are very willing, said the young man, bitterly. I don't believe, Bessy, that you care for me as I do for you!  
 "O Paul!  
 "And a pained look came over the fair young face.  
 "Well, then, what do you think of being tutor to Mr. Sinclair's little boys?"

Thank you; I don't fancy the idea of being a toad-eater to a pompous aristocrat like Henry Sinclair.  
 "But, Paul, we can't always do and be what we like in this world, pleaded Bessy, with a troubled look shining in her tender, garnet brown eyes.  
 "Easy philosophy for you!  
 "And the young man flung down his stem of bluebells.  
 "I suppose you would like to have me break stones upon the roads. I thought you at least could sympathize with the feelings of a gentleman.  
 "So I do, Paul; but I believe in the Scripture doctrine of a man's doing with all his might whatever his hands find to do.  
 "I see how it is, said Paul Estcott, haughtily; you are weary of our engagement; you want to break the worldly fetters that bind you. Very well; so let it be. You are free!  
 "And he strode away over the high grass, muttering to himself something about having suspected how it would turn out ever since North Van Brugh had come down from London to sketch the scenery and turn the beds of all the girls.  
 Bessy Hay made a step or two to overtake him, but she checked herself in an instant, with a scarlet stain on her cheek and a gathering mist in her eyes.  
 He ought to know better she thought and he does. No; I will not follow him. He will come back to me when the momentary pique has worn itself away.  
 In the meanwhile, Paul, vaulting over the low stone wall a few paces below, had very nearly stumbled over the prostrate form of a man lying among the red clover blossoms in the island of shade cast by an unbragous tree and reading.  
 Mr. Van Brugh.  
 The young artist glanced up with a sort of lazy scorn showing under his long dark eye-lashes. Paul bit his lip.  
 Engaged in the noble occupation of evesdropping, eh? he uttered.  
 "Come now, Mr. Estcott, don't be crusty; I didn't mean to overhear your conversation; but what was a fellow to do?—This is the jolliest place on the whole farm, and I wasn't to blame because miss Hay came out looking like Hebe's self to gather red currants, and you followed like her shadow. Come, let's go down by the trout stream, and talk over matters and things in general. Are you really in earnest about wanting something to do?"  
 "Of course I am.  
 "Then suppose you just glance over this letter, that I received this morning from my uncle, I've no idea of expatriating myself among the pig-tailed celestial for all the fortunes that ever were made. But for an ambitious man—read the letter, that's all."  
 Paul Estcott obeyed, almost dazzled for the moment by the brilliant prospect it seemed to open to him.  
 "You really give me the privilege of accepting or refusing this situation? he exclaimed.  
 "I really do; and, considering I don't want it myself, it is no very great stretch of generosity on my part. Only, you see, you have to decide at once, and be in the city to report yourself at my uncle's counting-house within four-and-twenty hours.  
 "Paul sprang up, flushed and eager.  
 "I'll do it. I'll show Bessy Hay that I am no do-nothing after all, when a motive really worth my while presents itself. But, glancing at his old fashioned silver watch, which contrasted so markedly with Mr. Van Brugh's elegant, full-jewelled chronometer, I have no time to lose.  
 "Not a second.  
 "But my trunk?  
 "You can get what you need in town; my uncle supplies the outfit.  
 "And, Bessy?  
 "Write to her to-night; my uncle will forward the letter under cover to me, and I will see that she gets it.  
 "Paul Estcott wrung his companions hand.  
 [CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

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