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JOS. CORNELL, Manager.



THE AFTERGLOW

By Roy Rolfe Gilson

Author of "In the Morning Glow," "When Love is Young," etc.



Smell the new-mown hay!
 Ah, there's fragrance for you eh? Yes, yes—sweeter than all your roses. Take a summer's morning like this, with the birds singing, and the sun warm on the stubble, and a little gamesome wind coaxing and wheedling you with whiffs of the harvest—why, boy, I can smell the hay I forked fifty years ago! I can feel the sun rising hotter in the sky, and the meadow simmering, and away off—away off by the apple orchard behind the house—I can see a little pink blur. First it bobs up and stops a minute—I rather think its on the wall; and then drops down a bit, and comes meandering through the pasture, and stops again, and bends down—I rather think it is picking flowers now, one of those pink wild roses to match itself; and then comes wandering through the bars. Boy, I rather think that was your grandmother, fifty years ago, coming out to us with the noon jug in her hands, all cool and dripping from the well. Lord Harry, but it was good; and did you ever notice—ever notice how pretty pink looks in a meadow? Ever notice pink flowers growing anywhere? Didn't you want to—kind of pick 'em, somehow? Eh?

Fifty years ago that was—fifty years, yet I remember. I remember other

things—things that I thought I had forgotten. When you're an old man like me you may remember this very morning, and if you do like as not you'll recollect some little thing—that empty flower-pot, or the way the rose-bush bends toward the pear tree, or how the sun's all yellow speckles on the garden path.

Why, things come back to me—now, there's your grandmother. Dark, your grandmother was, dark-haired and dark-eyed—big brown eyes—and there was always something very taking about her face even when she was a girl—I don't know—a kind of shining as though she was pleased about something. I guess she was most of the time. If it wasn't a lovely day, or a lovely flower, something was lovely. But she had a spirit—yes, yes—and she could get her own way, too, your grandmother could. I'll never forget as long as I live the time I took her buggy riding. Before we were married—that was fifty years ago—yet I remember just as though it was yesterday.

"We'd better have the top up, Bertram," says she as I helped her in.

"Oh, no," says I. "It's too fine to have the top up."

"Well," says she, "I think it would be better up."

"On such a fine day as this?" says I. "On such a cool, lovely afternoon—the top up?" says I.

"Well—" says she.

"Oh," says I, "let's have the fresh air and the sun all about us," says I.

"Very well, Bertram," says she. "It is lovely isn't it?" says she.

"Yes, yes," says I; "much too fine for the top up," says I, gathering the reins in my hand.

"Well—"

We drove off leisurely down the country road. It was beautiful, just beautiful around where we lived—all meadows and apple trees.

"Did you ever see so many blossoms?" says she.

"No," says I; "not since last spring," says I.

And she laughed and put back her hair, and then I noticed— "Why do you squint so?" says I.

"Do I squint?" says she innocent as you please.

"The sun now—is it too bright?" says I.

"It is pretty bright, Bertram," says she.

"Whoa, Peggy!" says I.

"What are you going to do?" says she.

"You take the reins, Kate," says I.

"I'll just put the top up to shade your eyes," says I.

"Oh, never mind," says she.

"It's no trouble at all," says I.

"But it's so cool and lovely," says she; "oh, much too fine for the top up," says she.

"I know, but your eyes," says I raising the top.

"Thank you, Bertram," says she, sweet as honey.

"Don't mention it. Get up, Peggy," says I.

And then, when we'd driven on a bit:

"The top," says I, looking at her out of the corners of my eyes—for, mind you, she'd never been known to squint in the sun before, and her hat was brimmed—"the top's up, Katie, dear," says I.

And nice and shady it is, too; isn't it, Bertram?" says she, a-looking away off at the apple blossoms.

"Sure," says I.

Dear, dear—why, I can hear your grandmother now, her little mouth all puckered up and her eyes shining.

"And nice and shady it is, too; isn't it, Bertram?" says she, just like that.

"Sure," says I.

Strange—strangest thing, now, but your grandmother never seems to remember that buggy ride, or anything about it at all!

That was a great year, boy, more

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