



As We See It

It is only the way we look at life,
Whether our eyes they laugh or
weep;
It is only the way we take the road
Whether the hills are low or steep.

It is only the way we lift our load
Whether it's heavy or light,
It is only the way we greet the day
Whether it's stormy or bright.
—Margaret Erskine.

Backward, O Time!

(Concluded from last week.)

THE man thanked her. She reminded him of a servant who was there when the house was his home, and whose name, even, recurred to him now, after all these years. She had been called Mary Doyle, and she, too, had been freckled, and her hair had been vividly ruddy.

Then the woman lifted a portiere of maroon damask, and, bending his head, Carden entered what in his day, at least, had been called the parlor. He halted for a moment on the threshold, while the curtains dropped behind him, and he tried in the dim light—for the inside blinds were closed—to find something familiar. The white marble mantelpiece, which confronted him, was doubtless as old as the house, but he did not remember it. On the wall to its right, he recalled, there had been a portrait of his father's first wife, a sombre-looking woman, with hair parted and worn low over her ears. In its place now he descried an old line engraving, which even in the dim light he recognized as a Raphael Morghen, and on the rear wall, where his father's portrait was hung—a portrait by Rembrandt Peel, painted when Carden, pere, was in the prime of his young manhood—was a black-framed mezzotint.

With these memories uppermost, he stepped back into the little cramped hall, and stood for a little at the foot of the narrow, straight stairs and as he paused there, his hand involuntarily sought his chin and, while his fingers traced out the line of a scar, still palpably present, his eyes dropped to the wall's wooden wab-base at the stair end. And again the years had rolled back, and he saw himself a child of five or six, lying there upon the floor, with little white skirt buttoned to little white waist, spattered with blood from a ragged cut, where in falling down those stairs, his chubby chin had come in sharp and forceful contact with the edge of that mopboard.

Carden drew his hand across his eyes as though he would brush away the scene and began slowly to mount the stairs. At the top of the flight to the rear, was what was known as the sitting-room. His recollection of it, as it had existed in his childhood, was much more clearly defined than his recollection of the parlor; and, because he had spent the better part of his days there, the memories that clustered about it were numerous and varied. It was there that he could see his mother most clearly. This window was hers; and there at the

farther one his father was wont to sit in the mornings before breakfast, reading the newspaper. And in the early evenings, before the child's bedtime his father sat there too, smoking his pipe and again reading the newspaper.

The room was very different now, of course, but not so different as the

newspaper lay, as if suddenly dropped, in the seat of a low, comfortable-looking rocking chair, and there were some new books, novels, with freshly-cut leaves on a centre-table, under a green-shaded drop light.

Against the wall opposite the window, was a piano, and Carden stooped to read the title on the sheet of music, which was propped upon the rack. It was a new arrangement of the familiar, "Consider the lilies of the field," and it brought back a long-forgotten childish error of understanding. He had heard this anthem sung in church, had subsequently had his mother repeat to him the words, and had puzzled for days as to why lilies should be expected to whirl (for so he had mentally translated "spin") and as to just what sort of a thing a "rade" could be, since Solomon was not one, and a lily was.

He smiled as he recalled his puerile misconception, and then frowned a little because the piano was occupying a sacred spot. To this place belonged a long hair-cloth upholstered sofa, with curved ends of rich mahogany, which could with facility be transformed at an instant's notice into a great lumbering stage coach drawn by four horses. A hundred times or more he had driven such a coach, with imaginative passengers, trusting their lives to the handling of lines and brake; and a hundred times and more he had with all the marvelous power of the legendary fairies, changed hassocks into valises, and handed them down from his perch to alighting travellers.



He stroked the neck of the plaything as though it were flesh and blood.

parlor, because, though the furniture was not the same, there was still much the same atmosphere of domestic comfort. He saw a woman's work basket on a little wicker table between the windows, and lying beneath it, a boy's blue and white striped pajama jacket, which had evidently been undergoing mending. A

And the stage coach, having become a sofa once more, made such a convenient napping place for tired father, whose habit it was to throw himself down there on returning from his office, dozing sometimes until dinner was announced, when mother would kneel beside him and kiss him to wakening.

He wondered whether the bathroom was in its old place back of the sitting room. No, it was not likely. The modernizing mania must have changed that—transferred it nearer to the bed chambers. The door was still there in the old place. He would investigate what was beyond. And, so deciding, he crossed the floor and, softly turning the knob, pushed the door gently ajar. To his delight he found it really little altered. There was a new bath-tub, of course—a porcelain enameled affair—having replaced the old zinc lined tub in which he had been lathered and scrubbed, an infant—but it occupied the same place; and there was a stove in the room, too, as there used to be. And—the explorer blinked his eyes and looked hard at an object standing to the right of the doorway. Then he closed his eyes for a moment, fancying that his sight was playing him tricks, but when he opened them once more, the horse was still there—a prancing hobby horse, covered with natural horsehide, and having a real horseshair mane and tail. One could not be the same. That was impossible. But it was the counterpart, at all events, of the horse he had ridden with waving sword, on the morning that news had come that Richmond had fallen to the Federal army, when his father and all the household had rejoiced, and he had not known exactly why.

He paused and counted back forty-two years. It did not seem possible such a space could have intervened. Standing there in the same room, with the likeness of the toy horse before him, he had come very close to rolling Time backward. And, then, in mental flight, he spun the years through, realising, alas, that much, very much, had happened in them.

Quite lost in thought, utterly unconscious for the moment of where he was Carden stood for one moment resting upon the neck of the carved steed, his eyes lowered and fixed on its red morocco saddle. He was standing thus, when a voice, low and musical, awakened him not rudely, but rather pleasantly, from his reverie.

"If I can be of any service," he heard, "I hope you will permit me."

He saw that a lady was standing in the doorway. She was a very winsome-faced lady with chestnut hair, like his mother's, and hazel eyes that were veritable orbs of kindness, though even as Carden glanced at her, he detected something akin to roguishness in their expression. But her mouth seemed tender and sensitive to an uncommon degree, which might give to her whole countenance at times an aspect that savored of the pathetic.

He bowed in a courtly fashion to which she was unused, but it pleased her, nevertheless, for she smiled, and when he spoke she told herself that she liked his voice.

"You can, indeed," he said, with much cordiality, "and I shall be only too happy to call upon you, Mrs. —" he paused. "Did I understand the maid to say Penfield?"

"Mrs. Penfield, yes," she answered affably. "You are looking over the house with a view to renting?"

"With a view to buying," he returned.

She shrugged her shoulders. "I should like to sell," she said, "but I doubt if anyone would care to pay my price. The house, as you see, is old, and not in the best of repair, and I fear that I am asking more than you, or anyone else, would think fair."

He stroked the neck of the plaything steed, as though it were flesh and blood, and she looked at him a little curiously. He was very distinguished looking, she decided, and she liked his thoughtful, gray eyes.

"I have not asked what valuation