

The Ram Lamb.

By Adeline M. Teskey.

"**T**HAT there thing's no use," said Jake Bender roughly, giving an apparently lifeless lamb, which was stretched on the ground one cold April morning in a field adjoining the barnyard, a punch with his coarse boot, at the same time picking up clods to forcibly drive away the mother-sheep which was standing protectingly near her helpless young.

This remark was addressed to his wife who was standing near him with a shawl over her head and around her shoulders, she was out milking.

Jane Bender stood gazing down at the still breathing lamb as her husband walked into the barnyard shoving the reluctant old mother sheep before him. Something in its forlorn appearance touched her, and stooping she gathered it into her arms, wrapped it warmly around with her thread-bare shawl, and started for the house.

To a superficial observer Jane Bender was not a beautiful sight as she strode across the corner of the stubble-field, a short cut toward home. She bent forward as she walked, her skirt was short to "git quit o' the mud," her cow-hide boots, their laces tied in a large bow-knot at the top of each boot, were plainly visible beneath the short skirt, and her faded shawl, which enfolded the shivering lamb, was drawn tightly down around a thin weather-beaten face. But the fact was she was more like an angel at that moment than most women—if angels are ministering spirits. Her husband coming out of the barn, seeing the lamb gone; looked after her and said angrily, "There she be agin, wastin' her time over that there half-dead lamb, which aint no good fur nothin'. I oughter know! She be always a-coddlin' over some lame hen, or sick chicken, or—or somethin'!" While she, as she looked down at the lamb in her arms with a great tenderness in her eyes, said to herself: "Ho be gittin' harder 'nd harder every day."

If I had tuk Silas Mauer he'd had a kind heart." And she heaved a little sigh for the lover she had discarded years before, when her choice fell upon Jake Bender.

She went on with the lamb to the house, and placed it carefully on an old piece of blanket behind the stove. Then she warmed some milk, and put a couple of teaspoonfuls down the lamb's throat, and went on to strain her milk.

When Jake came in he gave a contemptuous look at the lamb behind the stove saying, "that there thing aint good fur nothin', I oughter know," and he would have given it another punch with his big boots, if his wife had not anticipated him and protected it with her hand.

After a few hours of warmth and nourishment the lamb was persuaded to open its eyes on the world again, by noon it could raise its head, and by night it could stand on its feet. In two or three days Jane considered it well enough to take back to the old sheep. But, strange to relate, the maternal instincts of the latter seemed to have taken flight, and she refused to own her offspring. So the lamb was thrown completely upon the tender mercies of its benefactor. Jane carried it back to the house, and, under the constant protest and scorn of Jake, began a daily attendance upon it. It grew in beauty,

and when it was two months old Jane christened it Dandy.



About this time, Jake seeing he had not succeeded in stopping his wife, and hating to be thwarted, threatened to kill Dandy, as spring lamb brought a high price.

Jane was aghast at the proposition; for the lamb by this time had become a pet, and for fear her husband would carry his threat into execution some morning before she was up, found an old padlock and fastened the small pen in which Dandy was kept, and carried the key on a twine string around her neck.

During the summer, by some happy chance, a prize-list of Canada's great industrial fair fell into Jane's hand. She was looking through it when her eyes fell on the following: "Best Ram Lamb fifteen dollars." That instant she conceived the idea of taking Dandy to the fair.

There could not be a better surely than he. Why should he not win the fifteen dollars?

She would tell Jake nothing about it, but would at once begin to save up money from her eggs and butter, to pay expenses.

As the time drew near, Jake, one evening when he was at a neighbor's, heard a whisper of what his wife intended doing. He cogitated about it as he walked home. "She wont do it when the time comes," he said aloud, after some meditation, "She's too skury. She never went anywhere alone in her life, let alone Toronto. An' I wont go with her," and he chuckled triumphantly at the thought. "She aint a-goin' to come it over me that that there lamb is good fur anything. I said once fur all 'that there lamb aint good fur nothin', an' I oughter know.' But he waited in vain for his wife to ask him to go.

It was with much quaking of heart that Jane Bender began to make preparations to take the lamb to the Fair herself, but she was buoyed up all the time by the determination to let Jake see that Dandy was good for something.

Dandy was a little unmanageable at times, as all pet lambs of the male persuasion are apt to be, and Jane was obliged to go herself, and lead him by a cord, for not a step would he walk for anyone else.

On the afternoon of the last day of entry she had the satisfaction of seeing him proud and haughty standing within one of the fair ground's pens.

He was a beauty, and she did not see how the judges could fail to see it. She had washed him to almost spotless whiteness, and tied a blue ribbon around his neck.

He was a saucy, petted fellow, and had a manner of holding up his head and looking fearlessly at the people, which gave him quite an air of superiority beside the other sheep who were huddled in groups, looking frightened and drooping.

The sheep had to be in September 3rd, but were not judged until September 7th.

Jane spent every intervening day on the fair-ground, most of the time looking at Dandy; her nights she spent with Almira Jones, a niece who lived in the city. She carried her lunch with her, and sat on some retired seat in the grounds, timid and scared, and munched the bread and butter Almira gave her, with some of her own home-made cheese.

She was away eating her lunch when the judges went around, and when she came back to see Dandy he proudly bore the red ticket tied to his blue ribbon.

It was the proudest moment of Jane's life, she would have jumped up and down for joy, old and all as she was, if it hadn't been there were so many men around.

As it was, as soon as their backs were turned, she contented herself with giving Dandy a good hug through his bars, while she whispered in his ears, "I alwus knew it."

The next day the vanquished Jake received the following postal card, the first Jane ever wrote:—

"Mister Jacob Bender,—Dandy's tuk the first prize."

"JANE BENDER."

The Black Patti.

IT seemed at first glance as though an ebony statue had come to life, and was moving down the hotel parlor with the graceful undulating carriage peculiar to Southern women, for the Black Patti had chosen on this morning of my call to give emphasis to her color by robing entirely in black clinging gown of soft dull fabric, a little cape with silken throat ruffings; hair a heavy dusky black with slightest touch of curl, coiled closely about a prettily-shaped head; lustrous eyes, and skin deeply and frankly dark;—it was certainly effective in its accentuation, and a marked contrast to her appearance on the evening previous. Then she stood before the footlights in the Toronto Opera House, in a modern Parisian gown of white satin, in whose faultlessly fitting bodice shone a few beautiful jewels; the dusky face was pale with stage "make-up," and the plump arms concealed by long silken gloves. As far as gowning was concerned she might have been the real Patti



The Black Patti.

or Albani. Yet I liked the Black Patti of the black robe and the morning, best.

We were old friends and we chatted pleasantly together. Madam Jones has a modest and attractive personality.

It is over four years since the prima donna paid her first visit to Canada and Toronto, and she has spent most of the long interval abroad in London, Paris, in Germany, and in Italy also. In each place her songs were rendered in the language of the country.

She met with most cordial receptions everywhere, but her especial favor is given to Paris. "If I were rich," she says, "I would go to live in Paris always. It is so bright, so delightful."

Madam Jones is a native of Virginia, although her present home is in Providence, R. I. She is happily married, and her husband, a quiet and pleasant young mulatto gentleman, travels with her.

She is only twenty-seven years old, although she has been singing ever since she was a child.

"My voice is inherited, I think," she said. "Both my father and mother were sweet singers."

It is a voice clear and powerful, with extensive range. The low notes are very sweet, although the higher ones ring somewhat hard. The articulation is perfect. But greater than these is the dramatic temperament suggested rather than revealed beneath a quiet, concert exterior.

Madam Jones has a splendid collection of medals and jewels given her by her own people, especially during a South American trip made just before coming to Canada four years ago.