

"Should you like new scenes, Martha?"
 "I'd like the scenes the stories tell about—handsome ladies and gentlemen in fine places—good people that's always good and never go wrong, or if they do you don't mind it, and some sad ones as kind o' like their sadness."

"But you won't go into my part of the world to find these people, Martha?"

"I don't know where it is; the story-people seem to know."

He was silent, and filled his pipe anew.
 "Would you like to see over our place?" she asked.

"No," he answered curtly; then added, "Are you all alone?"

"Yes; Aunt Maria she's gone to Miss Brown's funeral—she died o' the gallopin' consumption. Her husband built this here porch, he did. Aunt Maria always liked Miss Brown; such a hand for Yorkshire pudding, she was. There's sure to be a good dinner at the buryin'—the Browns always have good dinners when they die. Aunt Maria is an old maid, and she would be precious angry if she found you here."

"She shall not find me here. And you dislike men, too, I suppose, Martha?"

"Oh, my!" she said; "why, I don't know none—at any rate, I didn't till you came along a couple o' hours ago. But the couple o' hours seems like a year."

She was perfectly calm, not confused in the slightest.

"So the couple of hours seem like a year? Have you grown so tired of me, Martha, that the time drags?"

"Oh, mercy! no. I wish you'd never go—that is, I mean—"

Now she did blush!

"Suppose I'd stay?" he said, looking at her quizzically.

"Oh, I don't know," she faltered, drawing back.

"No, Martha," he said, with a sigh; "these peaceful places are not for me; I am one of the predatory ones of the earth. You wouldn't believe me if I told you I was an Arab, would you? But tell me; are you always peaceful? But you say you are. How I should like to know the story of such a one as you—a sort of moral prescription. Suppose you tell me your story, Martha. By the way, what is your other name?"

"Martha Brookes. And what is your name?"

"Arthur Castle. You have it, Martha; and now the story."

"Story! I can tell no story."

"Oh, you are the only woman who never could, then. Now, Martha, tell me a story—as though you were talking to a child, you know, and begin it with 'once on a time,' and all that and yet let it be about yourself. Somehow, I rather feel that I should like to hear you speak at some length. Did any one ever tell you that you had a soft voice, Martha, 'an excellent thing in woman'?"

"No, never," she said.

"Well, you have, you know; so sit down here and tell me all about Martha Brookes, as though she were somebody else."

"Seems to me I can't refuse you nothin'," she said, confusedly, "and I'll try. But indeed there ain't nothin' to tell."

But guided by him she seated herself upon the upper step of the porch, he arranging her so that a glint of light struck upon her hair and lit up the depths of her eyes. She clasped her hands before her, looking up for inspiration.

"Now," he said; and, watching her curiously as she sat there, he made up his mind for a rustic picture while she spoke.

"Once on a time," she began, "there was a young woman named Martha, that hadn't no mother, no father, no nothin' but her Aunt Maria, which she sometimes believed was only her step-aunt. Martha was not always a nice young person, for her temper was that bad you wouldn't think, particular when her Aunt Maria called her Limpety-fetch-it, when she wasn't tidy enough, and her aunt didn't consequently think very much of her; for her aunt was a real good woman, a regular church-goer, and was a mission society, and vice suppression, and all those things, and she often said that but for Martha she'd see her way clear. It's very silly, isn't it?"

"Oh! well, go on."

"Yes. So Martha was often alone. You see she didn't know young people, because she was—was a little lame, and never played games and such, for the children they laughed at her, for she'd look funny skippin' about; and so she got into the queer habit of not goin' with live people, but goin' with dead people."

"With dead people?"

"Yes. She used to go up to her room and watch the sky, and think her mother and father was up there a-lookin' down at her, and so she quite got acquainted with the people her father and mother knowed in glory. So one night—why it was last night, Arthur Castle—one night Martha she dreamed that she'd died herself; maybe Miss Brown was on her mind; and she dreamed she went up to glory, and there her mother and father just caught hold of her, and she knowed that well, and they put their arms around her real tight. Oh! it's awful nice to have people's arms around you real tight."

"Is it?"

"I mean people that you love. So all the neighbours was there too, and Miss Brown she said, 'Is this Martha? Why she ain't lame no longer, and she's not bad-tempered no longer.' And Martha she said, 'Good people, it's me—just Martha. I've always been this

way; I've always wanted folks to love me and like me, but somehow they couldn't; and now I'm dead and gone, I have got all I wanted when I was alive, for my mother's and my father's love it makes me in heaven what they would have made me on earth had they lived.' So immediately Martha woke up and knowed it was a dream. And that day her Aunt Maria went off to Miss Brown's funeral, and Martha was upstairs a-thinkin' of her dream, when she spied a tramp coming from afar off—"

"That's like the Prodigal Son, Martha," he interrupted.

"Now, that's all my story," she said.

"And so that's all the story! Didn't Martha rather like the tramp that wasn't a tramp?"

"Maybe she did—how should I know? There is many girls named Martha."

Her voice had grown querulous, and her face troubled.

"And don't you think Martha was sorry when the tramp that wasn't a tramp left her?" he persisted.

"Oh, don't, don't!" she cried, in pain. "Oh, why did you ask me to tell a story? I didn't mean nothin'."

"There! there! never mind," he said, in the soothing voice so dangerous to feeling like her own present feeling. "I'll tell you a story now, shall I?"

She did not answer him, but sat there with her eyes down.

"Once on a time," he said, "there was a young man who was an artist. He was a dreadfully conceited young man, and in his earlier life, and with much association with other young men and much reading he had made up his mind to conquer the world. But he had not gone very far when he was conquered himself—and by what, do you think, Martha?"

Why, by a pair of eyes—woman's eyes. These eyes were deceptive eyes, but how was he to know that? They led him where they would, and they deceived him. After they had deceived him it seemed the devil came to him, and the artist went about doing all the harm that he could. Then even harm became stale to him, and he tried to call back that old spirit of ambition that had once actuated him; but he scarcely succeeded. So about a year ago he took up his pack and went from land to land making pictures, trying in all ways to forget what could never, never be forgotten. He was a weak man, of course, and he knew it, but knowing it only made him the wilder. He had sad times of it, and he sunk down overpowered by the load of sin and misery and memory he had carried so long. All the time up to this morning he was so. He ate nothing yesterday; he slept not last night. This morning, wild and sad, he took up the old march again, and at last he came across a peaceful sort of country, and afar off he saw a little house—something like this little house. Something urged him to come to the little house; so he reached it, and found a young woman named Martha."

She had raised her face and was looking at him, her lips parted, her eyes shining. He reached and took one of her hands, and held it between both his own.

"This young woman taught him more than she knew, more than he even knew, and seemed in some inexplicable way to lead him back to purity and truth, or it may have been the newness of the scene and its surroundings. When he goes away from this young woman he shall always remember her, her peace, her sad, lonesome lot, that seemed not sad, her talking with dead people, her pretty dream. Had he met this young woman earlier in his life he might never have gone away from her again; for he was so tired of dissipation and foolishly-learned people, and it would have been his dear delight to teach her many things, to make her fit to be his companion, perhaps, and in time she would have loved him and—oh, there! that's all. My story ends abruptly too. How strangely I have been talking!"

"No," she said, pulling her hand away, and looking at him, smiling tenderly but with white face, "you have not talked strange. But, Mr. Castle, didn't this Martha never like the young man? Didn't the young man never ask her this? Couldn't she have tried to be clever and learn things he liked? Don't you think that maybe she'd have loved to do all he wanted her to? Don't you think she knowed how dumb and stupid she was after she'd set her eyes on him, and in one hour maybe thought more of him than she did of all the wide, wide world? Suppose this Martha had been pretty, and clever, and good, wouldn't the young man have stayed?"

He had risen to his feet. He placed his hand upon her drooping shoulder, looking kindly in her face.

"I think not," he said, "for all that was past for Martha. Yet suppose he should say to this Martha, 'I am not sinless, but I want rest very much; shall I stay, Martha?' what would she have answered?"

Should he stay? Whatever was womanly in her asserted itself. She stepped aside; she seemed to have been in another dream of dead people.

"Martha ought never to have answered that question quickly," she said, soberly.

"To be sure," he laughed; "and I have been making a fool of myself, I suppose. 'Oh, well—now, see, the sun is sinking—I have a long journey before me. I thank you for your kindness, Martha Brookes; and fare thee well, and if for ever, then for ever fare thee well!'"

"Good-bye!" she said, gently, and put her hand out.

"Oh, shake hands!" he said. "Certainly; why not? Good-bye! I hope your aunt will soon be at home. You are not afraid to stay alone?"

"No," she said; "I am used to it. And, Mr. Castle—"

"Yes."

"Do you think that whatever Martha thought of the young man would always be for his good? Don't you think she might even pity his sorrow?"

"Perhaps."

"Yes, she would, Mr. Castle; she would—oh, she will always, always; she can't help it. And wouldn't the young man try to be happier for it?"

"The young man will try to be better for it—he swears that; for he has seldom met any one who cared for him disinterestedly, and the young man only knew Martha a matter of a few hours, mind."

"The few hours may be all Martha's years," she said.

He looked at her—should he stay? Did this mean more than he had ever known? "Good-bye, again," he said, and stepped out of the porch. She went beside him.

"I will go to the gate with you," she said, and he noticed how feebly she walked.

Down the path of old-fashioned flowers, sentimental country flowers, they went in the mellow sunset, slowly, lost in thought, loth to go apart, bewildered and dreaming. She held the gate open for him. Should he stay? One word would keep him, he knew, and he was so tired of everything, his life had closed in upon him so early. Silently she stood beside him, her hands resting upon the gate. He lingered!

"Would it make Martha happy if the young man were to—well, to stay with her for ever?" he asked.

"It would make her happier to know that he was made better through her love—"

"Through her what?"

"Well, her kind feeling for him."

"Could she have no stronger feeling than kindness?" he asked, suddenly. And then the foolishness of the whole thing flashed upon him—he, the artist, the rich, cultured man, the fashionable man about town, to be standing here beside a rude country girl with vulgar surroundings, an Aunt Maria, and an uncle Tom, and who possessed a few other negative attractions—he to talk sentiment, and with her! With a light laugh he pulled his hat over his brow.

"Good-bye, finally, Martha Brookes," he said, cheerily, and went down the road. All the same, though, after he had gone a few yards he turned round, and saw her still standing beside the gate, her eyes following him. Was she not a pure, sweet country flower, as much as the little daffodils that sprang around his feet distorted and plain by reason of choking earth, but blooming with as much meaning as any of nature's flowers? And he had come across the daffodils as suddenly as he had come across her, and had always spurned the simple flowers before he had gained the artist's insight. Should he stay, or go out again into all the old trouble, and sadness, and weariness, and pain? Would he be a better man? He would be a better man remembering her.

Quick as a flash he turned away, walked rapidly down the road, turned once more, waved his hand, paused for a second—then on once more, never again to see her in this life.

HEARTH AND HOME.

TRUE GREATNESS.—Ignoring or quickly forgetting personal injuries is characteristic of true greatness, when maner natures would be kept in unrest by them. The less of a man a person is the more he makes of an injury or an insult. The more of a man he is the less he is disturbed by what others say or do against him without cause. "The sea remembers not the vessel's rending keel, but rushes joyously the ravage to conceal." It is the tiny streamlet which is kept in a sputter by a stick thrust into its waters by a wilful boy.

FEMALE INFLUENCE.—All the influence which women enjoy in society—their right to the exercise of that maternal care, which forms the first and most indelible species of education; the wholesome restraint which they possess over the passions of mankind; their power of protecting us when young and cheering us when old—depend so entirely upon their personal purity and the charm which it casts around them, that to insinuate a doubt of its real value is wilfully to remove the broadest cornerstone on which civil society rests, with all its benefits and all its comforts.

MONEY-GETTING.—The man who uses up every energy in the one object of making money, and who gauges the value of everything according to the opportunities it affords of increasing his stocks and bank balance, is throwing away not only the beauty, but much of the usefulness of his life. For money is but one means to happiness; it is nothing in itself, nothing when separated from the wisdom that knows how to use it and the energy that extracts value and beauty out of it. That life is not worth living that is wholly absorbed in gaining money and sinks away exhausted in the effort. It is like that of the builder who should spend his entire energies in collecting materials without erecting a single structure, or the wood-cutter who should use all his hours of labour in diligently sharpening his axe.

INTENTION.—In order to enjoy the present, it is necessary to be intent on the present. To be doing one thing and thinking of another is a very unsatisfactory way of spending life. Some people are always wishing themselves somewhere but where they are, or thinking of something else than which they are doing, or of somebody else than to whom they are speaking. This is the way to enjoy nothing well, and to please nobody. It is better to be interested with inferior persons and inferior things than to be indifferent with the best. A principal cause of this indifference is the adoption of other people's tastes instead of the cultivation of our own, the pursuit after that to which we are not fitted, and to which, consequently, we are not in reality inclined. This folly pervades more or less all classes, and arises from the error of building our enjoyment on the false foundation of the world's opinion, instead of being, with one regard to others, each our own world.

THE BLOOM OF AGE.—A good woman never grows old. Years may pass over her head, but, if benevolence and virtue dwell in her heart, she is as cheerful as when the spring of life first opened to her view. When we look upon a good woman, we never think of her age; she looks as charming as when the rose of youth first bloomed on her cheek. That rose has not faded yet; it will never fade. In her neighbourhood she is the friend and benefactor. Who does not respect and love the woman who has passed her days in acts of kindness and mercy—whose whole life has been a scene of kindness and love and a devotion to truth? No; such a woman cannot grow old. She will always be fresh and buoyant in spirit, and active in humble deeds of mercy and benevolence. If girls desire to retain the bloom and beauty of youth, let them not yield to the sway of fashion and folly; let them love truth and virtue; and to the close of life they will retain those feelings which now make life appear a garden of sweets, ever fresh and ever new.

GOOD CONVERSATION.—The tone of good conversation is flowing or natural; it is neither heavy nor frivolous: it is learned without pedantry, lively without noise, polished without equivocation. It is neither made up of lectures nor epigrams. Those who really converse, reason without arguing, joke without punning, skillfully unite wit and reason, maxims and sallies, ingenious raillery and severe morality. They speak of everything, in order that every one may have something to say; they do not investigate too closely for fear of wearying; questions are introduced as if by-the-by, and are treated with rapidity; precision leads to elegance, each one giving his opinion, and supporting it with few words. No one attacks wantonly another's opinion, no one supports his own obstinately. They discuss in order to enlighten themselves, and leave off discussing when dispute would begin; every one gains information, every one recreates himself, and all go away contented; nay, the sage himself may carry away from what he has heard matter worthy of silent meditation.

ON October 16th drums ceased to exist in the French infantry regiments. This increases the effective of the army by 8,000 men, for in active service the trumpeters render the same service as the common soldiers.

HUMOROUS.

LIKE a piece of steel, that man is the strongest and most elastic who always retains his temper.

A MAN in Connecticut is described as being so lazy that he puts all the work he can on his digestive organs.

A CHINAMAN who was looking at an Englishman eating tripe, said, "And yet he bates dear little mice!"

THE sun in July is too hot for a boy to work in the garden. It is as much as he can do to get through his cricket games during the month.

"I STAND upon the soil of freedom!" cried a stump orator. "No," exclaimed his shoemaker; "you stand in a pair of boots you never paid for."

SAID Lawyer A. to Doctor B., "Why are we two just equal to one highwayman?"—"Because," answered the doctor, "between us two, it's a man's money or his life."

THE country is full of poets, scholars, and deep thinkers, but the man has not been born who can tell why the sleeves of summer under-shirts are always five inches too long.

THE Germans are a frugal people," says an American writer, after visiting the Berlin opera-house. "As soon as the opera was over, the man in front took wads of cotton from his pocket, and stopped up his ears to save the music he had paid for."

Consumption Cured.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. SHERAR, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.