

POETRY.

"GOD BLESS YOU."

The phrase is trite, the insincere
And heartless gibberish use it.

SELECT STORY.

IN A PREDICAMENT.

What Came of Nell's Quarreling in
Grandma's Closets.

In an easy chair on the broad, old-fashioned parlor that extended the entire length of the rambling old farm house...

In the doorway stood the figure of an old woman dressed in a quaint brocade...

"Grandma Parker," gasped the girl, "is it you or your ghost?"

"A child, indeed. You speak as though you were as old as Methuselah!"

"I am eighteen and feel quite grown up. Will you proceed with my story, I was up in the garret, wasn't I? The first thing I saw was a large oak chest, the one we used to play house on, so I took a peep into it to see what mysteries it contained...

"You had been in my place you would have looked worse than I did. You do resemble grandma. Where are you going?"

"Just down to the hammock," she returned carelessly.

"Why not?" questioned Nell, coolly.

"Some one might see you and then what would they say? The country is such a dreadful place for gossip."

"We have been here three days and not a soul has come near, or a ghost either. I almost wished they would."

"What, the ghost?"

"Of course not," she cried, impatiently, "how can you be so stupid? I meant the neighbors."

"You should say what you mean," began Ethel, severely, then laughed in spite of herself.

"Good by, Ethel," Nell called out.

"Don't worry, I can take care of myself. There!" she exclaimed, as she settled herself in the hammock, "that's comfort, but what if one should come?"

to the house; my granddaughter, Ethel Cameron, is here and I wish you to meet her.

"I will on conditions. I told mother not to expect me home for tea. Will you let me stay? You always did."

"Agreed," she replied, "that is Ethel on the porch; is she not pretty?"

"Very nice looking, a regular blonde, but I prefer brown hair and rosy cheeks."

Nell smiled broadly at the very plain compliment, and thought how disgusted Ethel would be when she would tell her.

"By this time they had reached the house."

"What if Ethel should tell him?" she thought. "I will risk it anyway."

"You should not contradict your elders," answered Nell severely. "I will leave Ethel to entertain you while I see Dorothy about the supper, and ignoring Ethel's appealing look, she started for the kitchen. Dorothy was nowhere to be found."

"She must be at the spring house," thought Nell, and immediately started in that direction. Just as she reached the garden gate the object of her search came up the hill with a bucket of water in one hand and a pan of eggs in the other.

"Dorothy!" she called out.

"Where are you?" she gasped.

"Here by the gate."

Dorothy gave one glance, then uttered a shriek, turned and ran down the hill. In her haste she tumbled and fell, the bucket overturned and the contents spilt all over her.

"What can be the matter?" muttered Nell, as she hastened after her.

"Are you much hurt?" she asked, sympathetically.

"It's her ghost—her ghost!" she groaned.

"It is only Nell, don't you know me? I put grandma's dress on just for fun."

"I came to tell you there would be company here to tea."

"Law sakes, you don't say so! Help me up. We'll have to be spry or it will be late." She tried to rise, but sank back with a groan. "It's my foot, she moaned; I must have sprained it."

been doing, dressing up for the stage, eh?"

Instead of answering Nell flung into the house, closing the door behind her, while the astonished group looked on in silence.

Ethel came to the rescue, explained the matter as best she could, blaming Nell as little as possible.

"I hadn't any idea of this, said the stranger. 'Will you introduce me, grandma?'"

"Certainly," she returned. "He is Frank Meade, the son of our nearest neighbor. I knew him at once, although it is ten years since I saw him last. What, going already? Then I shall expect you to dinner to-morrow."

Early the next morning Nell started for the orchard, for she felt as though she could not face Mr. Meade, sitting beneath the friendly shade of an apple tree, and wondering if he had come yet, and what he thought of her. Looking up she saw the object of her thoughts leaning against a neighboring tree, regarding her thoughtfully.

"Broken bones are easier mended than broken hearts," he returned.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"That I love you dearly; will you marry me?"

"You will never call me grandma or laugh at me, will you?"

"No, indeed!"

"And you didn't suspect who I was, did you?"

"No, although different things puzzled me. I thought it was because I hadn't seen you for so long. Come, Nell, answer my question and not keep me in suspense any longer."

"Since you seem so anxious about it, I really suppose I will have to say—yes."

When they went in to dinner Mr. Parker asked, jokingly: "How is grandma to-day?"

"If you please, sir," said Frank, "this lady has promised to be Mrs. Meade. We have decided on the 25th of August. I invite you to all the wedding."

"Well, well, well! I never thought of such a thing. That's her, my boy, and you will be happy if she is anything like her 'Grandma Parker.'—Home."

And she cried after, bitter tears that ever, and even the camphor bottle possessed no spell to exercise his grief.

Mrs. Hartley was vainly essaying to console her, when there was the sound of another arrival outside the door—and in a second the poor old lady felt the strong clasp of tender arms around her.

"Are you?" with a toss of the head. The new-comer pushed past Mrs. Jaycox, her very cap borders bristling with indignation.

Miss Tunis swept her checked-silk floozie through the room, looking here and there with light-blue prominent eyes, and leaving an odor of mille fleurs behind her which combined oddly with the scent of Mrs. Jaycox's camphor bottle.

"To think that people can be content to live in such a place as this!" laughed she, superciliously.

"You wouldn't like it, I suppose?" said Miss Tunis.

"Well, there's no law compelling you to do so," observed Mrs. Jaycox, her face getting redder and redder—"and so I'd have you to know, Miss Tunis, whatever my son John may have told you."

"He said I should like it here," said Miss Tunis, "but I don't."

"I never heard an engaged girl speak out so bold in all my life!" said Miss Hartley to herself.

"You don't, eh?" said Mrs. Jaycox.

"Yes, I do," said Miss Tunis. "It's a deal too old-fashioned and hogholby to suit me—though, indeed, if this back kitchen could be pulled down and a sunny bay-window built out in its place—"

"Then I can tell you it won't be done in my time!" said Mrs. Jaycox.

"I don't care what he told you!" said Mrs. Jaycox, stormily patting her foot on the bright stripes of the home-made rug carpet. "I ain't crazy—but I guess I should be pretty soon if you came here to live."

Miss Tunis laughed disdainfully as she crossed the wooden threshold.

"The place don't suit me at all," declared she.

"Glad to hear it," said Mrs. Jaycox.

"Back to the depot, driver," called out Miss Tunis—and the next moment the very old lady was left looking at each other. Then for the first time Mrs. Jaycox burst into tears.

"Don't cry, Mrs. Jaycox," said Mrs. Hartley, "don't! 'Tain't worth cryin' about."

"And that's the woman I'm going to have to live with!" said Mrs. Jaycox, sobbing poor old Mrs. Jaycox. "Oh, I wish the Lord had seen fit to take me before things came to this! Oh, why couldn't I have been contented with Kate Kesley, when John wanted her so bad? Kate never would have found fault with the old house, no, nor the old woman neither."

And she cried after, bitter tears that ever, and even the camphor bottle possessed no spell to exercise his grief.

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GIRLS OF NO ACCOUNT. Tens of thousands of them thrown out to perish yearly in China.

In China tens of thousands of recently born girls among the poorer classes are thrown out to perish, and at Shanghai I saw a tower formerly used to facilitate this infanticide, says Dr. Joseph Simms, who has recently returned from an extended trip of the Flowery Empire. It is practiced in every part of China, but especially in the interior and in the Less district. As soon as we get many miles from the coast it is quite usual to see near a joshouse, or place of worship, a small stone tower from ten to thirty feet high, with no door, but a hole in the side, reaching into a pit in the center. The children that parents wish to rid of are thrown into this hole, and quicklime soon consumes the little form. It is said that the priests take charge of this cruel work. It has been estimated that every year 10,000 female babies are brutally slaughtered in the empire. One Chinaman being interrogated about the destruction of his recently born girl, said: "The wife cry and cry, but kill also same."

In every large city in China there are asylums for the care of orphans, supported and conducted by foreigners, who save yearly from slaughter tens of thousands of female infants, says the New York Sun. At Hankow, which is 600 miles inland, I visited a Roman Catholic orphanage for children that have thus been thrust out to perish. Mother Paula Visnara, the Lady Superior of the institution, informed me that she had received seven that day, and one day thirty were brought in. Of course these have never been consigned to a baby tower. Sometimes they are found wrapped in paper and left at the edge of the river. Sometimes they are buried alive by the father, but while yet living are dug up by some one else and brought to this institution. Several women are employed by the Mother Superior in looking after the little victims. Upward of 1,000 are received every year. Many of them, of course, die soon after from the exposure and neglect they have suffered through being abandoned, and many are boarded out by the institution in the town.

Those who accept the charges have to bring the children one a week for inspection, and then, as they bring them, they receive the pay for maintaining them. This is an Italian charity and one of the most estimable in China. During the twenty-three years of its existence it has saved the lives of 35,000 to 40,000 children, of whom a fair proportion have grown to manhood. It received considerable support from the European residents at Hankow, of whom there are about 120.

These children who remain within the premises of the institution are fed and clothed, and when old enough are taught to make lac-knit stockings and do other useful work. They never know where they came from or who their parents were. When they are four years of age their feet are bandaged, according to the general custom of all classes in China, to keep them small, as that increases their chances of marriage.

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Give thanks. That it is three times as efficacious as the old-fashioned cod liver oil.

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