

YOUR VIOLIN.

Your violin! Ah me!
'Twas fashioned o'er the sea,
In storied Italy—
What matters where?
It is its voice that sways
And thrills me as it plays
The days that were!

Then let your magic bow
Glide lightly to and fro—
I close my eyes, and so,
In vast content,
I kiss my hand to you,
And to the times we knew
Of old, as well as to
Your instrument.

Poured out of some dim dream
Of lulling sounds that seem
Like ripples of a stream—
Twaisted lightly by
The slender, tender hands
Of the weeping willow wands
That droop where gleaming sands
And pebbles lie.

A melody that swoons
In all the truant tunes
Long, listless afternoons
Lure from the breeze.
When woodland doves are stirred
And moaning doves are heard,
And laughter afterward
Beneath the trees.

Through all the chorusing
I hear on leaves of spring
That drip and patter
Of April skies.
With echoes faint and sweet
As baby angel's feet
Miebi walk along a street
Of Paradise.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

MRS. PERKINS'S PRESENTIMENT.

If there was anything "in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth," that Mrs. William Perkins was afraid of, it was a burglar! When a mere child, her father's house had been broken into and robbed, and the remembrance of the excitement of that time was too strong to be ever effaced. And ever since she had had a house of her own, she had been expecting a similar occurrence. Not a night passed that she didn't look in the closet or under the bed, and her husband jokingly declared that she even examined the soap-dish and match-safe in the expectation of beholding a fierce robber concealed therein!

She was, indeed, a timid little body, starting nervously at the slightest sound, always on the lookout for "signs," and now and then, when "blue" and depressed, declaring that "she had a presentiment."

"I believe something is going to happen to-night, William," she said, late one summer evening, as she sat on the edge of the bed and unbuttoned her shoe. I have had such a heavy, weighed down feeling all the afternoon."

"You coop yourself up too much, my dear. A run over the hills or a call at a neighbor's would tone you up wonderfully."

His wife looked injured.

"I thought you didn't approve of women gadding about," she said, with a pout.

"Not gadding, my dear, of course not. I only meant taking necessary exercise." But, anxious to avoid a storm, "What makes you blue to-night?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, unless it's thinking about burglars. Did you know that the Millers, who live up on the creek road, had their house entered last week? The thieves got a watch, a pair of earrings, and quite a sum of money. I truly believe they'll pay us a visit before long," and Mrs. Perkins shuddered as she tied her night-cap strings.

"Well, let them come!" said her husband, coolly, as he laid his tired head on the pillow. "They've been coming ever since we've been married and kept house, and that's—let me see—nine years in June. Takes 'em a long while—hey, Betty?"

"You needn't laugh. It's no joking matter. And I tell you what, impressively, "I know that something is going to happen—I feel it in my bones."

About twelve o'clock that night, Mr. Perkins was awakened by two cold hands clasping his neck, while his wife, with chattering teeth, whispered:

"William!—William! Wake up! Somebody is stealing your Plymouth Rocks!"

This was enough to fully arouse him, for he was somewhat of a poultry fancier, and the Plymouth Rock fowls, being at that time a very rare breed, had been purchased by him at an extravagant price.

He sprang out of bed, seized his revolver, and hurried down-stairs and out at the back-door. It was a warm summer night, and he experienced no discomfort in his light and airy attire.

Just as he approached the henney, the thief ran from it. No human burglar, indeed, but instead, a small black and white animal, a weasel or a cat—which, Mr. Perkins could not tell. But the animal, whatever it was, had one of his young Plymouth Rock chickens in its mouth.

"The pesky thing," muttered Mr. Perkins. "I wonder if I can't catch it." And away he started in pursuit.

Down the garden-walk went the thief—out under the front gate and across the road. Regardless of the stones and mud, and of his own scant attire, Mr. Perkins followed. There was a rush—then a scramble, a sprawl—a spiteful scratching and spitting—and, the next instant, Mr. Perkins had the struggling, furry body in his grasp.

Fortunately, the culprit proved to be only a cat. Its victim was limp and lifeless.

Angry and disappointed, Mr. Perkins bestowed a parting kick on the murderous feline, and then, holding the poor little Plymouth Rock in his hand, he turned to retrace his steps to the house.

But just at this instant, around a curve in the road, not more than a dozen rods away, was heard the sound of horse's hoofs and carriage-wheels.

The moon threw a broad, white light upon the road, and Mr. Perkins knew that he could not re-cross without being seen by the occupants of the approaching vehicle. Accordingly, he darted behind a clump of elder-bushes, and, crouching down, waited in breathless anxiety.

"Jerusalem!" he muttered to himself. "This is a pretty pickle for a deacon of the church to be in!"

Nearer and nearer came the carriage, the horse jogging along at a funeral rate—evidently the driver was in no hurry.

There were two persons in the carriage. The moonlight fell full on their faces, and Mr. Perkins, peering through the bushes, recognized Henry Martin, a likely young farmer of the vicinity and Dora Saunders, his sweetheart. It may be well to state just here, that the two were returning from a party at which, for a wonder, fair Dora had been so unusually gracious, that young Martin, hitherto a very timid lover, had courageously made up his mind to go through the trying ordeal of "popping the question" on their homeward journey. Indeed, by the time they had reached the Perkins's domain, he had actually gotten so far as to say in stammering tone:

"And now, Dora, you know, just as well as I do, that I would do anything for you. Because—because—you know I lo—"

"Oh, oh, oh!" screamed Dora, for, just at this instant, the horse, being endowed with the sharpness of animals in general, had suddenly seen something white in the bushes—in fact, nothing less than a gleam of Mr. Perkins's flooring drapery—and, much frightened, shied to the other side of the road.

Coaxing, commands and even the whip availed nothing. Balking and determined, he would not pass the unknown object.

"Blast the creature! What ails him! He's never acted so before," Martin exclaimed.

"Don't whip him again! He's frightened. He sees something in the bushes. I know he does—I see it myself—it's something white."

"A garment blown from a clothes line. Or, maybe it's a newspaper. I'll go and see."

"No! Don't leave the horse! He's too nervous! Just see how he trembles. You hold him by the bridle and I'll go and see what it is," and with a nimble bound, Dora sprang from the carriage and walked towards the bushes.

Now Mr. Perkins was not a nervous man, but his predicament at this particular minute was not very pleasant. The thought of his scant attire filled him with consternation. And there she—a fine, modest young lady!—was every moment drawing nearer and nearer. A mortifying discovery was inevitable! The only alternative was to take refuge in flight.

The next instant young Martin and Miss Dora were startled at seeing a tall, white figure spring from behind the clump of bushes, dart across the road, and, half-lost among the shadows, creep along the side of the fence.

The horse, rendered frantic by this sudden apparition, gave a violent plunge, and, breaking loose from his master's hold, rushed madly down the road.

"Oh, Henry! What is it? A ghost—I'm sure it is! You know that a peddler was found murdered just about here years ago. And I've heard the place is haunted! Oh, it's a ghost!—it's a ghost!"

"Nonsense! Ten chances to one it's a burglar up to some deviltry. I'm going to shoot at him—that's what I am!"

For, knowing that he would have to ride five miles over a lonely road, and having his mind somewhat exercised by the reports of there being burglars about, Harry Martin had that evening taken the precaution to bring a revolver with him. Drawing this out now, he cried, excitedly:

"Speak, or I'll shoot!"

Unfortunately, Mr. Perkins was a little bit deaf, and, in his trepidation, did not hear what was said. His only desire was to get within the shelter of his own house. For several yards along the fence, there grew a row of brier-roses, and here he floundered, the sharp thorns clinging to his garment and lacerating his flesh, as he vainly strove to find some opening through which he might climb over.

Just as he put one foot on the lower rail in the act of leaping over, he heard the report of the pistol and felt a shot stinging in the fleshy part of his leg. Groaning with pain, he sank upon the grass.

"Good heavens, Dora! It's Mr. Perkins himself!" young Martin exclaimed, overcome with horror and dismay.

The confusion of the next hour may be easily imagined. Dora rushed up to the house. She was met at the door by Mrs. Perkins, whose alarm at the long absence of her husband had been increased by the report of the pistol. Fortunately, the little woman acted like many other nervous persons, who, weak at imaginary dangers, are strong in time of real trouble; and, repressing her emotions, she calmly assisted Mr. Martin and Dora in bringing in the helpless body of her husband.

But an hour later, when Mr. Perkins lay com-

fortably in bed, rejoicing in the assurance that the wound was trifling, his wife could not help saying as she sank into an easy chair beside him:

"I knew that something would happen to-night! What do you think of my presentiment now, Mr. Perkins?"

CORBYN'S POOL: A MAY MEMORY.

It was the burst of warm May weather for which we had waited so long. The sun was hot in the cloudless blue sky, and all around there was that infinite variety of green verdure that is only to be seen in those few weeks of the year when spring is melting into summer. There were the blue greens of the firs, the vivid greens of the larch, the deeper shade of the sycamore, and the yellow greens of the beech and oak. This year the oak has come into leaf before the ash, therefore, according to the folk-lore rhyme, we must only "expect a splash," and not "a soak," in the coming summer. But the hawthorn was unusually late, and the hedges, as yet, only had their green dresses trimmed with the white embroidery of the black-thorn blossom. In the hedgerows the fronds of ferns rose up with their curled ends, like so many episcopal croziers. In the meadows were lambs with their mothers, the ewes still wearing their heavy fleeces; and dappled kine; and, snowy white against the green, a file of geese, marching with military precision and outstretched necks.

I crossed the stile, after listening to the familiar double note of the "wandering voice," and the rich gush of melody from the nightingale in the adjacent wood. The meadow in which I found myself was being kept for hay, therefore there were no sheep or cattle in it. A heavy horse-roll had been taken over the field, and had left its mark in parallel lines, and, as the blades of grass in each stripe were slightly bent by the weight of the roll in opposite directions, the effect of the sunlight on the green verdure was somewhat similar to that of a sheeny satin. Not that the meadow was wholly green, for it was enamelled with white daisies, gold dandelions, pale yellow cowslips, magenta-colored orchids, silver-white cuckoo flowers, and, on the hedge-row bank, primroses, wood anemones, and purplish-blue hyacinths. On the golden disc of a dandelion fluttered a tortoiseshell butterfly, and on another was poised a great bee, in his humble livery of black velvet, turned up with ruddy brown and gold. A hare waited until I had nearly stepped upon her, and then scampered off in sudden haste from her form, where she had pressed down the long grass, and made a comfortable bed, with standing rushes for curtains, to screen her from the north-east wind.

At the upper end of the meadow I came to a pool of irregular shape, so surrounded with tall hawthorns and nut-bushes that it was difficult to make an approach to the water, which was covered with a thick green scum. I remember that it was about this time last year that a laborer, named Davis, was at work in the field next to this; and, at noon, his dinner was brought to him by his little boy, who asked if he might go to the pool in Green's Close—as it is called—and cut himself a stick from the nut-bushes. The father gave him permission, cautioning him not to fall into the pool. Presently the lad returned; but without his nut-stick.

"Father! there's a calf in the pond. I saw it moving its head."

"Nay, my lad, it's no calf; unless it's strayed there and tumbled in."

But he at once went to the pond, where a closer examination showed him that the form in the pond was not that of a calf, but of a human being, though the head, which alone was visible, was covered with duck-weed. Davis knew nothing about Naiads or Nymphs; and this genius of the pool was not of inviting aspect. A low moaning came from the duck-weed head, showing that life was still left in the body. Now it happened that a long pole had been thrust through some of the hawthorns, in order to prevent cattle from falling into the pool at that point. So Davis pulled out this pole; and, clearing away the bushes, pushed out the pole to the duck-weed head, so as to raise it further from the stagnant water. A grey-bearded chin was thereby exposed to sight.

"Hullo, guv'nor," cried Davis, "whoever you are, ketch 'old o' the pole, and I'll help you out." But the figure only moaned, and made no effort to take hold of the pole.

"If you won't come to me, I suppose I must come to you," said Davis, when this had gone on for a few minutes. "It ain't a proper place for a feller creetur to be left in, specially an old man." He lowered himself into the pond, and was soon up to his armpits, and sinking into the deep mud. It was with difficulty that he reached the figure; and, when he had done so, he found himself powerless, without assistance, to pull the drowning man out of the water.

"Challie," said Davis to his boy, "thee must run to George Jackson—he's in the ten-acre—and bid him hurry here at wanst, whilst I keep this old man's head out of the water."

The lad did as he was told, and quickly brought Jackson to the spot. Meanwhile Davis had cleared the duck-weed from the head of the speechless man whom he was supporting, and discovered the face of one of his own neighbours.

"Why, if it ain't Mister Corbyn!" he said in great surprise.

"Mister," it may be observed, is a term of respect frequently bestowed, in rural villages, upon old men; and merely indicates age, and not any superiority in social position.

"Whatever in the world brought you in this 'ere pond, Mister Corbyn? Do 'ee tell me."

But Mister Corbyn, though he opened his lack-lustre eyes, did not open his mouth, or give any further sign of animation; so Davis continued to hold him up until Jackson arrived. Between them both they managed to lift him out of the tenacious mud, in which his feet seemed to be fast embedded; though it was no easy matter, for the men were up their shoulders in the water. But at last they laid Mister Corbyn on the bank, alive and safe, but looking a most pitiable and bedraggled object, covered with green scum, mud and filth. It was very evident that they could not get him home, which was more than a mile distant, unless they carried him; so Davis stayed with him while Jackson went off to the farm, close at hand, and came back with a cart, in which they placed him, and Davis took him to his home.

Mister Corbyn's home was the cottage of his married daughter, Mrs. Sharrad, whose reception of her aged parent was anything but filial, and was by no means suggestive of a rustic life, or an A-cadian experience. "I suppose," said Mrs. Sharrad, jumping at an erroneous conclusion, "that the old vagabond's so drunk you've had to bring him home in a cart?"

"He's never been near the Red Lion, so far as I know," said Davis.

"So far as you know, Ben Davis," sneered Mrs. Sharrad, "and you, as likely as not, 'elping him to spend the money as he draws from the relieving horsifer. Where's he been, then, to make himself like that 'uns?"

"You'll soon guess, if you look at his clothes. He's been in the water."

"And he's got his Sunday suit on, the destructive old vagabond! I missed it as soon as he'd gone out this morning; and me a-working the skin off my hands to keep him decent. He ought to be ashamed of himself. Drat him!"

"It's you as ought to be ashamed o' yerself, Mrs. Sharrad, a-going on like that against yer own flesh and blood. You bring a cheer"—by which he meant a chair—"or do some 'out to help to get yer father out o' the cart, instead o' dealin' out abuse in that there fashion. The old man's been and drowned hisself, and it's a mercy as you see him alive."

"Drowned hisself! What 'un ever he go to do that for?"

"Maybe, you and yer sharp tongue had some 'ut to do with it. Everyone knows as yer always a nagging and a aggravatin' on him from mornin' till night."

"Oh, the lies as some folk will tell! And me the fondest o' daughters to a wicked old father as'll go and drown hisself!"

"Any way, I found him up to his neck in the pond in Green's Close; and another half-'our would have settled his business, and made an inquest on him; and the crowner might ha' said some things as you'd be vexed to hear. Now put that cheer so as I can lift him out. He ain't properly come round yet."

Then Mrs. Sharrad changed her tactics. "Oh, my poor dear father! Whatever made you to go and drown yerself, and in yer Sunday suit, too? And yer've lost yer 'at! Oh, this is a most serious blow! It cuts my feelin's dreadful! Oh, oh!"

Mrs. Sharrad rubbed her tearless eyes with her apron, while Davis helped the old man into the cottage. Mister Corbyn was seated in the chair, as he was carried in, and would have made an excellent Guy Fawkes.

"Now," said Davis, "you just hot him up a mug o' tea as quick as you can, and let him get the taste o' somethin' better than duck-water. You're a-comin' round, ain't yer, Mister Corbyn?"

"What made yer do it?" said Davis, as the old man feebly nodded an affirmative reply. Mister Corbyn glanced timidly at his daughter; but she had her back turned to him, and was clattering among the teacups in a corner cupboard. So he plucked up courage to whisper, "Her! Her druv me to it! Naggin'—naggin'—always a-naggin'!"

"I thought as much," said Davis. But he waited to see the old man drink some tea, which his daughter administered to him with sundry ejaculations of "Oh, my poor dear father! what should I have done if you had been lost to me! and your poor Sunday suit all ruined!"

"Now," said Davis, "you take him to bed, and get off them wet things, and make him snug; and thank yer stars as my little 'un spied him in the pond afore, e were dead-drowned."

Then Davis went back with the cart, and left Mister Corbyn to the tender mercies of his daughter.

The old man had, as it were, come back to life; and the old life came back to him. Mrs. Sharrad and her nagging were over with him; and to save him from a repetition of his former deed, he was persuaded to make a change of residence, and go into "the Union." Mister Corbyn had always called the work use by the opprobrious epithet of "the basteel," and had professed to have the greatest dread of entering its walls; but, when I saw him the other day, he acknowledged that he is far happier where he is than where he was. As for the pool in which he so nearly perished in May last year, the villagers speak of it as "Corbyn's Pool," and perhaps under that name it may be found in the Ordnance map of the future, though probably no one will know why it was so called.

CUTHBERT BEDE.

AMONG the promised novelties in London is to be a grand banjo contest.