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Poetry.

The Robins have Come.

There's a call upon the house-top, an answer from the plain,
There's a warble in the sunshine, a twitter in the rain,
And through my heart, at sound of these,
There comes a nameless thrill,
As sweet as odor to the rose,
Or verdure to the fall;
And all those joyous mornings
My heart pours forth this strain:
"God bless the dear old robins,
Who have come back again."
For they bring a thought of summer, of dreamy
Jocund days,
Of king-cups in the meadow, making a golden
haas;
A longing for the clover blossoms,
For roses all aglow,
For fragrant blossoms where the bees
With droning hummings go;
I dream of all the beauties
Of Summer's golden reign,
And sing: "God keep the robins,
Who have come back again."

LEAP YEAR.

O ladies! who the privilege
Obtain this year of "popping,"
Pray ponder ere across the hedge
Of penitence you are hopping;
For Sixty-eight penance may be
A dear, and not a chap year,
This you take advice from me,
And "leap before you Leap"—Year!
Well! spite of me, you would, I see,
A never last amiss—
Be a man and wife! O, don't you be
Dis-satisfied next Leap year!
A lottery all marriage is,
But this is the worst Sweep-year!
So take the tip I offer, then,
"Leap before you Leap"—Year!

Interesting Case.

BETSEY MORSE. A Country Story.

School District No. 17 of the town of Pineville, consisted of a goodly number of scholars, both large and small, handsome and homely, and endowed with the usual variety of talent and disposition peculiar to a school.
There were such boys, who spent their leisure time in cutting out bones and houses on the writing desks; boys who drew comic pictures with red chalk on the plastering, and then gravely wondered at those who work it could be; boys who thought the flavor of a wafer greatly improved if it could be privately eaten during school hours.
There were girls who showed their artistic taste, by picking the top of their wadded dresses, to make a variegated nap mat in their needle books; and some who showed their natural predilection by keeping their books filled with paper dolls. There were scholars who always had good lessons, and some who were hopelessly stupid. There were some who were always the teacher's favorites, and who generally enjoyed immunities from punishment not accorded to others guilty of like offenses.
Was to the unlucky pupil who excited the aversion of the teacher, and after that, of the school; but such are found in nearly all collections of the young. For downright tyranny, commend me to a district school. There, might makes right, the majority make the rule for the despised minority, and the authority which every pupil feels to act out of his or her impulses often depends on personal influence.

Among those who for years stymied the current of popularity in the district in question was Betsey Morse. Betsey was truly an uninteresting specimen of girlhood; homely and ungainly, and without any of the mental brilliancy that would have made her respected, she seemed truly what her chief tormentor, Will Hopkins, designated her, "a regular gawky." Just because nature had been less bountiful to her than to others, she seemed to be singled out as a mark for every one's malice. Since one always stood ready to upbraid her dinner for her, and many a time was poor Betsey punished for misdeeds committed by others, every teacher for years on, and they had a new one every season, seemed to have the faculty of believing anything of her that they wished.
Betsey bore all these things pretty patiently; I do not know how she could have well done better; and it never seemed to enter her

mind that she could rebel with any success. She had no brother to protect her, no sister to sympathize with her, and her parents were staid, reserved people, whose lives seemed far apart from that of their lonely child.

But there came a time when Betsey's school days when for two whole winters she had a companion. Mortimer Bliss came down from the North to stay with his aunt Mrs. Brewer and go to school. He was fourteen at that time, about Betsey's age, but her opposite in every respect. Handsome, generous, and full of animation, he was much loved by all as she was disliked. His love of justice caused him often to become the defender of Betsey from her train of persecutors. "Come, boys," he would say, "that's no fair, and would of some men into better behavior."

There were many rival spellings schools held in that and the adjoining districts about those days, and it was owing to Mortimer that Betsey was invited to go with the rest of the school, whenever they went away from home to exhibit their spelling. Will Hopkins used to propose that they should draw cuts who should ask her to go, but Mortimer, who had a kind of daring about his nature, would say, "Now Betsey, be sure and have your word, and stand as when we come along," and Betsey, thinking herself favored to go at all, was perfectly satisfied with her informal invitation.

Before Mortimer's coming she had been especially slighted at their own spelling schools. It seemed to require a great deal of moral courage in the choice to select Betsey, although she was not an indifferent speller; but Mortimer had set them such an example of better things, that while he remained in Pineville, she was comparatively happy. He returned to his home every spring, and came back again when the winter school commenced.

School opened the third season, however, without his arrival, but he was daily expected, and the scholars were tip-toe with delight, when one day at recess, Sarah Brewer, his cousin, entered in tears, with the intelligence that Mortimer was dead—had died suddenly, about the time he had expected to set out to return home. The scholars heard the news with that kind of awe with which the young hear such things, and an unusual silence prevailed for a time, when it was observed that Betsey Morse was weeping quietly but profusely.

Will Hopkins was the first to notice it, and it turned the current of his ideas. "Wall, I wouldn't cry, Betsey," said he in a mocking voice, "you'll spoil your pretty face, and that would be such a pity." "I don't care," said Betsey, roused for once to defend herself, "he was good to me, any how." "Better dry up though," pursued her tormentor, "aint likely he'd ever be back at you if he'd lived to get married." Betsey dashed to reply.

Pretty Marie Blair, who sat not far off and who smiled to encourage Will in his attacks on Betsey, did not dream that she was encouraging the very disposition which would one day, when exercised towards herself, make her a pining, unhappy wife.

Had Betsey been of a sensitive nature, she would have been soured by her experience at school; but nature, in depriving her of beauty, had kindly seemed to withhold the sensibility that would otherwise have cost her much suffering. She became a tolerable scholar, and although at the age of eighteen, to use an expression of Will Hopkins, "she did fair to be an old maid," yet was, as a sober, at least a useful member of society.

She did not mingle much with those of her own age, and whenever she did attend any of the gatherings of the young folks, she used to sit like a neglected wallflower, unless some amiable one invited her to a sister in the amusements of the evening. But if Betsey lacked the charms which won admiration, she had at least no envy of those more favored than herself in such respects. She listened to the stories of the conquests of her mates with a longing wonder that was strange to see, and when any of rival belles had a quarrel among themselves, and undertook to get Betsey's sympathy, she gave it as freely as if they had not always before systematically slighted her.

Thus passed five years of Betsey's youth. She had almost ceased to think of marriage as her lot, and had she remained in the neighborhood where she was reared, she might have equalled public expectation and been an old maid; but some good fortune took her away ten miles, to a distant, to do up her fall sewing. There she made other acquaintances, went about some, and finally passed the entire winter. For some reason, Betsey appeared to much better advantage away from home; she was no longer Betsey, who at school had been teased by half her mates and laughed at by the other, but Miss Morse.

The first place that Betsey went from Uncle Ben Slocomb's was Mr. Branson's, one of the best and richest farmers of the town. There was a large family, and her services were required a month or more. While there she daily saw the eldest son, Levi Branson, go in and out; but she was so accustomed to pass through the world unnoticed, that she never dreamed the quiet, sensible man, whom everyone, even his own father, looked up to, bestowed second thought on her. She had so little idea of attracting so superior a man as he seemed to be, that there was nothing artificial in her manner, whenever he addressed his conversation to her, nor did she appear to less advantage for that. She did not know that the cultivation and knowledge of the world which Mr. Branson possessed, enabled him to see deeper into her mind than she did herself, and consequently, when she returned to Mr. Slocomb's, although she was pleased to see him come in every evening, she did not dream that his visits were intended for her. She knew that she was passing a delightful winter, the happiest indeed that she had ever remembered, but she did not inquire into the cause. In many respects Betsey was still a child.

It was, however, with some confusion that she announced to her uncle that he need not be to the trouble of taking her home, as Mr. Branson was going over to Pineville the next day, and asked her to go with him. Uncle Ben, amused at her apparent simplicity, made no remark, but the next morning as he looked from the dining room window and saw Levi coming into the cottage arranging the robes to protect her from the cold, he said to his wife, who stood by, "Well, mother, if Betsey gets such a husband as Levi Branson, you know I am a plain man, and can't help coming straight to the point when I have anything to say. Will you come back here some time as my wife? I have a home waiting for a mistress, and if you do not refuse I will try to make you as happy as you deserve."

Why, Mr. Branson! was Betsey's first astonished exclamation when she found herself able to speak at all, you can't be in earnest wishing to marry me. Nobody ever saw anything in me to love before; how can you. You undervalue yourself greatly," was his reply.

The remainder of their conversation would perhaps, not be interesting to general readers, but she was not hard to be convinced of his sincerity, and by the time they had reached the site of the old school-house, where she had suffered martyrdom so many times in her childhood, she was engaged. The old structure had been removed, and a new building, of neat and attractive appearance, erected in its stead. In the new joy that filled Betsey's heart she mentally compared the change in place to the change that had begun in her life. Her old solitary unloved life seemed passing away, and a new and brighter existence opened before her. She really began to think herself of some consequence in the world, after all. The respect and confidence which her future husband showed her, inspired her with a new feeling—confidence in herself.

The time that intervened between the engagement and the wedding was a season of quiet but intense happiness to Betsey. So much more joy had fallen to her lot than she had ever anticipated, that she wondered what she had ever done to deserve it; and when the wedding day came and passed, and after a short bridal trip Betsey was installed in her new home, she felt that for her, life had just begun. Her husband was neither brilliant nor vicious, but he was uniformly kind, and one of those rare men in whose uprightness one could confide without fear and Betsy appreciated him, which is saying something for her. Many of her old schoolmates who were in the habit of regarding her with such contempt, might have taken pattern from her thorough house keeping, and envied her the affection which her husband manifested toward her. Betsey could not have told why she banished the poppies and marigolds which had been the ornament of her mother's front yard and

garden, and substituted other and rarer plants in her own, but it was with the feeling that in this happy home there should be nothing to remind her of her past loneliness. Here in her home where peace and plenty reigned, Betsey might be said to have rivalled the bee in industry. Year after year went by, and children came to fill her cup of happiness to overflowing.

Nathan and Levi, the two eldest, had been named for grandfather and father, by the proud and happy grandmother. Two girls, Sarah & Ellen, came next. The greatest difference of opinion Betsey was ever known to have, with her husband, was when he wanted to call one of the girls by her name. Besides these was the baby, a few weeks old.

When Betsey's children were old enough to begin going to school, almost for the first time during her happy married life the old school experience rose up before her, and she felt resentful for the persecution she had suffered. She felt as if she would be willing to endure almost everything herself rather than have her children grow up with as little self respect as she herself had possessed. But as she saw their joyous countenances, she felt that the world were a different look to them from what it did in her childhood. She said but little about these things, for Betsey had not learned to be demonstrative.

One morning, about this time, Mr. Branson entered the room where Betsey was seated with her baby in her arms. Well, said he pleasantly, isn't this boy to have a name some time, Betsey? What is it going to be?

Betsey was silent a moment, as if gathering courage for the effort; then she spoke: "Levi haven't I always been a good wife to you? Her voice was so different from usual that her husband looked at her in astonishment.

Why, Betsey, he replied what have I done that you should think I don't appreciate such affection as few men find?

Nothing, Levi, said she but there is something I wanted to say to you about naming the baby. The whole story came out then; how through the dark years she knew him, she loved the memory of Mortimer Bliss, and it seemed to her now, through the development and self knowledge that had come with her mature years, that she had been guilty of deserting toward her husband, in keeping the knowledge from him. I always knew, she went on, that that Mortimer would not have thought of me if he had lived to marry.

I knew that what he did for me was out of kindness, but after he died I was so lonely that, young as I was, I could not help dwelling on the memory of one who had befriended me so often, and I felt some way glad that, as he was dead he could never be anything to anybody else. He seemed to belong to me. I do not speak of this, Levi, she continued, still more earnestly, because I do not feel perfectly satisfied with my lot in life.

A woman accustomed to appreciation and kindness could not have loved you as I have, but I believe that I am a better woman than I did have even an imaginary affection to keep my heart warm during those years, and I have been thinking that it would not pain you I would like to call the baby Mortimer, I would not ask you without telling you everything.

Mr. Branson listened to this recital without any of the jealous pain that a more selfish and narrow mind might have felt. He understood the truthfulness of heart which had caused Betsey to make this little confession. He knew that he was first and best in her heart, and he answered: Willingly, dear wife, I shall be Mortimer; but do not think of the past and blame yourself for what was perfectly natural.

One of Betsey's quiet enjoyments after her marriage had been to ride over to Pineville Centre occasionally to attend church. She never felt her heart swell with such thankfulness for the blessings of her lot as it did in the dear old church, when the past rose up in contrast with the happy present.

Something like a year after the time we last looked upon Betsey, she might have been seen one pleasant morning in June, in her old place there with her husband, the little Levi, and his two sisters; Nathan, the trusty pilot on having charge of the baby in the rosy family carriage without.

There was quite a time shaking hands with her old schoolmates after service, all glad to recognize her now, and a great crowd around the carriage by the young mothers to get a sight of the baby.

Yes, broke in her husband, not at all improved in his disposition, and who never lost an opportunity to make his wife feel uncomfortable if I was going to marry again I would look out for the homeliest old maid I could find. Look at Betsey Branson, she looks at least ten years younger than Maria does now.

She can afford with such a kind husband as she has got, retorted his wife.

I believe that Betsey is as happy a woman as need be, said Mrs. Wilson, but I do wonder how she came to call her baby Mortimer.

I don't said Rep. Hopkins, the sum of it is that there always was more about her than any of us was willing to allow, and I believe she has never forgotten her cousin. I often think of the jokes I used to play on her, and wonder if she bears any malice for them.

Patty tyrant as he had ever been, he would have prized Betsey's good opinion now.

I don't think she does, said Mrs. Wilson. I have heard her express as much myself, for she says her present happiness has caused her to forget what ever was disagreeable in the past.

Happy Betsey, riding homeward, surrounded by those she loved and with the pet of the family at her side, could she have heard Mrs. Wilson's remarks, would have echoed the sentiment—Rural New Yorker.

Our Secrets Revealed.

The following anecdote, which we think too good to be lost, has been told us by the present Master of one of our city Lodges:

Meeting an old friend whom he had not seen for some time previously, and after exchanging the usual courtesies, the former said: "By the way I am sorry to find that you are a member of a secret society, and a Master of a Masonic Lodge. I saw your name recorded as such in the Courier."

"Yes, I have for some years been a Freemason, and am proud of it, especially for its secrecy," said the Master of the Lodge.

"Do you know that the church to which we both belong—the Baptist," said the friend, "denounces all secret societies, but especially the Masons?"

"I have heard that it does," said the Master, "but it misrepresents their ignorance or prejudice, or both, and I regret our church is not as tolerant as Freemasons are."

"What do you mean? Are you not bound by secret oaths, and have secret, which you studiously withhold from all the world besides? If they are honorable and lawful, why keep your secrets? asked his friend.

"Yes, we have oaths which taken in anger, bind our society together, and we are sworn to our objects, studiously keep them so. But continued the Master, as an old friend on whom I can rely, I think I can tell you what they are, without breaking my faith, with my Lodge or the Fraternity at large, should you desire it."

I shall be pleased to hear them, said the Baptist friend, all attention.

Well, then, replied the Freemason, I will whisper them in your ear. Listen carefully. The real secret of Freemasonry, consists in the exercise of every social and moral virtue, not only in the ostensible actions of our conduct, but also in private life, our latent springs are science, and truth; our craft is reason and good sense; our cunning is justice and humanity, our plots and contrivances are sincerity and benevolence, our revenge against our enemies is, by laboring to convert them into friends? "Is this really so? asked the Baptist, apparently incredulous.

"I give you my word of honor it is," replied the Master, "and knowing it is so, all the thousands of an ignorant or prejudiced clergy, be they Baptist, or of any other denomination, cannot make me waver in so good a cause. Of course you will keep what I have said to yourself."

Here they parted. N. Y. Courier.

MANURE FOR POTATOES. The Massachusetts Farmer says, I will give you a receipt for raising potatoes, that is worth the price of your paper for one year to any farmer that is short of manure. It is as follows: the best superphosphate of lime, and it will not cost half as much. I have tried it two years, and am satisfied that it is good on dry land. Take one cask of lime and slack it with water and then stir in one bushel of fine salt, and then mix in manure, enough so that it will not become mortar; it will make about five barrels put in half a pint in a hill, at planting.

RAISING CALVES.—Boil half a pint of flax seed in two quarts of water, ten minutes, to a jelly; then add skim milk enough for three calves, and in the same proportion for any number of calves. This food given to them twice a day, or three when quite young makes them healthy and vigorous; and is prepared with less trouble than either brood or hay tea.

An old lady who drives her own wagon from the country into Fulton Market, New York, drives a hard bargain when she gets there has a bank account of \$50,000.

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