

MY AUNT POLLY.

The greenest grass, the sweetest flowers, grow at Aunt Polly's door. The finest apples, miles around, Aunt Polly's orchard bore; Aunt Polly's cows were sleek and fat, her chickens a wondrous size, And Jabez Smith, the hired man, was witty, great and wise. I used to go with babe at night, with clinking pails to milk; Sometimes he'd let me feed the coits and rub their coats of silk; And the moon that rose in those days, just behind the cattle bars, Was twice as large as it is now—with twice as many stars.

Aunt Polly was a quaint old soul—a busy bee—by day. Having the honey up for all, with never thought of pay. How many dawns we watched the sun, up-rising in the east, Shake out its banners o'er the hills and drive away the mist!

Gold-pilged arrows pierced the gloom of valley, wood and nook. Bright flecks of crimson rode the clouds and tumbled in the brook. Gave back with cheer the apple's hue, the pumpkin's, and the squash. Till dear Aunt Polly would exclaim, "What a perfect day to wash!"

What steam of incense then would rise from dear Aunt Polly's tub! For sun and sky her heart gave praise with each all-cleansing rub; No skylark's note, no poet's song, more praiseworthy than the tune She hummed the while her linen white upon the grass lay strewn.

Aunt Polly, faithful, gentle, entered long since to reward; Her kind old face has slept for years beneath the churchyard sward; For her has dawned another day, more perfect, bright and glad Than when she rubbed the snowy clothes, while I stood by—a lad.

—Edith Keeley Stokely, in Youth's Companion.

THE MAKESHIFT OF JONAS KEMP

By Annie Hamilton Donnell.

Clarissa Kemp—late, very late—Clarissa Collins—carried each pot to the back door and inverted it briskly. The little heap grew high and unstable. There were a good many pots, and it was quite a distance from the sitting room window to the back door. Clarissa was tired when the stained green-painted shelves were emptied and all the litter swept up.

"There!" she breathed with a little gasp of relief, sinking into a rocker. "I'm thankful that job's done with! It's been staring at me ever since I came."

"I've supposed you'd've moderated so fast!"

The old horse started up and went staidly on toward the barn, with the trail of Clarissa's laughter in his wake.

"Clarissa's a real humorous woman," pondered Jonas; "she's got all of it that Alwidly didn't have. Whoa, back, Dennis!"

If Jonas noticed the unwieldy heap under Clarissa's rug on his way back to the house he said nothing about it. It was not Jonas Kemp's way to say things. In the trig little sitting room the bare shelves and the unwonted inflow of sunshine across them appealed dumbly to him, and Jonas answered as dumbly. His seamed old face turned doggedly away from the windows, and the pain on it was only visible to the faint, sweet face of Alwidla looking out of the daguerreotype on the wall. Clarissa's keen eyes did not see it.

Clarissa invariably spoke of the day, a few weeks ago, when she and Jonas drove from the minister's into the little trim side-yard, as "when I came." Since that day there had been a good many reforms at the Kemp place. The heap of discarded geraniums and fuchsias was only one of them.

"I can't and I won't abide a mess of plants round, littering! There's enough, goodness knows, that's got to litter without putting up with what ain't got to. You've got to water 'em, and you've got to putter with 'em and coddle 'em, an' there's always a mussy, wet place under 'em and sprigs and dry leaves. I can't abide 'em if other folks can. Those that like 'em are perfectly welcome—I don't."

"Where are you going to?"

"Just for a little smoke, Clarissa—just for a little smoke."

"Land of goodness—at two o'clock in the afternoon! Jonas Kemp, you aren't losing your faculties, I hope!"

Jonas peered up at the old clock above him and then at the afternoon sun riding across the heavens. He looked dazed. The pipe slipped through his fingers unnoticed and lay in two pieces on the bare floor.

"I guess I got mixed up, Clarissa; I thought 'twas after supper," he explained with an apologetic attempt at laughing. "I guess I'll go out and wait a spell, till 'tis."

Clarissa rocked backward and forward in the capacious, calico-softened chair, communing aloud. Her comely, middle-aged face had a look of relief upon it. Once only a slight shade of remorse quivered across it and was gone.

"He'd ought to know I'd do it," she muttered, "and he ought to have got his mind made up by this time. I've given him time enough—ever since I came. I told him, ten minutes after, that I couldn't fellowship with a mess of plants. I guess that was good and fair warning!"

The rockers took to sudden creaking as if pleading in Jonas' behalf. In the sunny windows the green shelves looked bare and lonesome. There were little round circles, smaller and larger, side by side along their lengths, where the pots had stood. The biggest circle of all spoke pathetically of Jonas' pet cactus that bore the dainty pink flowers amongst its spines—that "Alwidly" had set store by. Alwidla was the wife that had driven from the minister's into the trim yard first. Even Jonas was hardly fonder of plants than Alwidla had been.

"But passers-by were few, and Clarissa never passed by. Her way, when she went abroad, was by the wider main road that ran uphill and down again to town. Clarissa never went to the barn. Jonas Kemp and the cows, the great barn cat and Dennis were the only ones that saw the red geraniums blooming bravely in the barn windows—unless, who can tell?—unless Alwidla saw them.

Another thing Clarissa might have noticed was how long the old pipe lay untouched on the kitchen mantel. Jonas went out to his evening smoke night after night—without it! If it had been his way to say things he might have said that when one's plants have been destroyed ruthlessly one must replace them somehow even if one must buy them with the tobacco and that would have explained the times of late that Jonas had driven alone to the little city down the river and come back, past Clarissa's window and Clarissa's curious eyes, with a queer, humpy load "in behind."

"Humph! Now I wonder what Jonas's got all tucked up in behind," Clarissa would muse, eyeing suspiciously the humps. "'Tisn't grain an' 'tisn't critters—live ones anyway. And he couldn't've got 'em if they were

alive, not without my knowing where the money had gone to."

But Clarissa had not put her curious thoughts into questions, and the times of being curious and the knobby, covered loads "in behind" Jonas had gone by together. She was very busy all the late summer and early fall sewing rags for her gay new carpet that was to transfigure the dull little corner parlor where nobody went and nobody wanted to go.

One afternoon, as she sewed, she heard Jonas' plodding feet tap slowly up the walk and Jonas' heavy breath keeping time to the taps. What in land of goodness was Jonas coming in that time o' day for? It was so unusual that Clarissa let the strip of red and yellow rags slide out of her lap and curl like a brilliant serpent at her feet. Jonas "came in" so seldom, lately, except to his meals. She hardly saw his unsmiling old face from morning to night, for she had formed the habit of setting his dinner out on the meal chest in the porch and letting him eat it alone. Her own dinner she could "pick up" on the run, and it saved such a pile of litter and mess that way.

Again and again he mumbled it wistfully.

The tune Clarissa's heart-strings were waiting almost broke her heart. She got help at a neighbor's, and they took Jonas home. He was dozing all the way. It was almost a day later when Jonas fully awoke.

"Ain't it—pleasant—out here—in the barn, Clarissa?" he whispered, happily. "I like it out here—don't you?"

"Yes," Clarissa said brightly. "I like it 'out here,' Jonas."

The green-painted shelves had back their old tenants and new tenants, row upon row. The windows opposite Jonas' bed were full of geraniums and gay purple and red fuchsias, and the cactus was there that Alwidla had loved. Her mother's spinning wheel stood on a strip of carpeting near Jonas. How pleasant it looked "out there!" How the sunshine filtered through the geranium leaves and made dancing traceries on the wall. A sprig of the sun leaves lay across Clarissa's face, and Jonas smiled at it like a pleased child.

"Clarissa," he whispered eagerly. "can't we stay out here always? I like it out here."

Clarissa's eyes fell on a tiny litter of dry leaves under a window.

"Yes, Jonas," she smiled, "yes, we'll stay 'out here' always. I like it, too."—Country Gentleman.

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MASCOT ATE THE SHIP'S PAINT.

Sailors of the Gloucester Make a Capture and Roe It.

It was seven bells in the forenoon watch of the blistering July day when the auxiliary cruiser Gloucester sent ashore a landing party at the quaint Porto Rican seaport Guanica. The party had landed three hours earlier and had done its duty with the regulars of Miles' army in sending the Dons skedaddling into the heavy tropical forests which fringe the foothills of the Porto Rican coast.

It was now an hour of relaxation. In an unlucky moment a Spanish bantam cockerel emerged from under a house and emitted a lusty crow. Then it was that Lieutenant Norman gave his historical order: "All hands chase chickens!" The line of excited men-o'-war-men scattered in untaught disorder, pursuing the gallinaceous enemy.

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

SUNDAY'S DISCOURSE BY THE NOTED DIVINE.

Subject: "The Power of Perseverance"—The Successful Are Not the Most Brilliant, But Those Who Everlastingly Stick to One Line of Endeavor.

TEXT: "But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left handed; and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Ehud, the king of Moab."—Judges III., 15.

Ehud was a ruler in Israel. He was left handed, and what was peculiar about the tribe of Benjamin, to which he belonged, there were in it 700 left handed men, and yet so dexterous had they all become in the use of the left hand that the Bible says they could sling stones at a hairbreadth and not miss. Well, there was a king by the name of Eglon, who was an oppressor of Israel. He imposed upon them a most outrageous tax. Ehud, the man of whom I first spoke, had a divine commission to destroy that oppressor. He came pretending that he was going to pay the tax and asked to see Eglon. He was told that he was in the summer house, the place to which the king retired when it was too hot to sit in the palace. This summer house was a place surrounded by flowers and trees and springing fountains and warbling birds. Ehud entered the summer house and said to Eglon that he had a secret errand which he immediately attended to, and he waited on the royal presence. King Eglon rises up to receive the messenger. Ehud, the left handed man, puts his left hand to his right side, pulls out a dagger and thrusts Eglon through until the shaft went in after the blade. Eglon falls. Ehud comes forth to blow a trumpet of liberty amid the mountains of Ephraim, and a host is marshaled, and proud Moab submits to the conqueror and Israel is free. So, O Lord, let all Thine enemies perish! So, O Lord, let all Thy friends triumph!

I learn first from this subject the power of left handed men. There are some men who by physical organization have as much strength in their left hand as in their right hand, but there is something in the writing of this text which implies that Ehud had some defect in his right hand which compelled him to use his left. Oh, the power of left handed men! Genius is often self-observant, careful of itself, not given to much toil, burning incense to its own aggrandizement, while many a man with no natural endowment, catching the active in physical and mental organization, has an earnestness for the right, patient industry, all consuming perseverance, which achieve marvels for the kingdom of Christ. Though left handed as Ehud, they can strike down a sin as great and imperial as Eglon.

When Garibaldi was going out to battle he told his troops what he wanted them to do, and after he had described what he wanted them to do they said, "Well, general, what are you going to give us for all this?" "Well," he replied, "I don't know what else you will get, but you will get hunger, and cold, and wounds and death. How do you like it?" His men stood before him for a little while in silence, and then they threw up their hands and cried, "We are the men! We are the men!" The Lord Jesus Christ calls you to His service. I do not promise you an easy time in this world. You may have persecutions, and afterwards there comes a eternal reward of glory, and you can beat the wounds, and the bruises, and the misrepresentations, if you have the reward afterward. Have you not enough enthusiasm to cry out, "We are the men! We are the men!"

We laugh at the children of Sibiria for trying to build an ark, and the ark would be no good enough we could see a Babel in many a dooryard. Oh, the struggle is fierce! It is store against store, house against house, street against street, nation against nation. The goal for which men are running is chairs and chandeliers and mirrors and houses and lands and presidential equipments. If they get what they anticipate, what have they? Men are not safe from calamity while they live, and worse than that, they are not safe after they are dead, for I have seen swine root up graveyards. One day a man goes out into publicity, and the world does him honor, and people climb into scycamore trees to watch him as he passes, and as he goes along on the shoulders of the people there is a waving of his hand as wild hurra, To-morrow the same man is caught between the jaws of the printing press and mangled and bruised, and the very same persons who applauded him before cry, "Down with the traitor! down with him!"

Belshazzar sits at the feast, the mighty men of Babylon sitting all around him. Wit sparkles like the wine and the wine like the wit. Music rolls up among the chandeliers; the chandeliers flash down on the decanters. The breath of hanging garlands floats in the night air. The volens of revelry floats out. Amid wreaths and tapestry and folded banners a finger writes. The march of a host is heard on the stairs. Laughter catches in the throat. A thousand hearts stop beating. The blow is struck. The blood on the floor is richer than the wine on the table. The kingdom has departed. Belshazzar was no worse perhaps than hundreds of people in Babylon, but his position slew him. Oh, be content with just such a position as God has placed you in! It may not be said of us, "He was a great general," or "He was an honored chieftain," or "He was mighty in worldly attainment," but this may be said of you and me, "He was a good citizen, a faithful Christian, a friend to Jesus." And that in the last day will be the highest of all eulogiums.

I learn further from this subject that death comes to the summer house. Eglon did not expect to die in that fine place. Amid all the flower leaves that drifted like summer snow into the window, in the final dash of fountains in the sound of a thousand leaves falling on one tree branch, in the cool breeze that came up

to shake the feverish trouble out of the king's locks—there was nothing that spoke of death, but there he died! In the winter, when the snow is a shroud, and when the wind is a dirge, it is easy to think of our mortality, but when the weather is pleasant and all our surroundings are agreeable, how easy it is for us to appreciate the truth that we are mortal! And yet my text teaches that death does sometimes come to the summer house. He is blind and cannot see the leaves. He is deaf and cannot hear the fountains. Oh, if death would ask us, for victims we would point him to hundreds of people who would rejoice to have him come. Push back the door of that hotel. Look at the little child—cold, and sick, and hungry. It has never heard the name of God but in blasphemy. Parents intoxicated, staggering around its straw bed, oh! death, there is a mark for thee! Up with it into the light! Before those little feet stumble on life's pathway give them rest.

Here is an aged man. He has done his work. He has done it gloriously. The companions of his youth all gone, his children dead, he looks to the best and wearily the days and the nights pass. He says, "Come, Lord, Jesus, come quickly!" Oh, death, there is a mark for thee! Take from him the staff and give him the scepter! Up with him into the light, where eyes never grow dim, and the hair whitens not through the long years of eternity. Ah, Death will not do that. Death turns back from the straw bed and from the aged man ready for the skies and comes to the summer house. What does thou here, thou bony, ghastly monster, amuck his waving grass and under this sunlight sifting through the tree branches? Children are at play. How quickly their feet go and their locks toss in the wind. Father and mother stand at the side of the room looking on, enjoying the glow of the fire, and it is possible that the wolf should ever break into that fold and carry off a lamb. Meanwhile an old archer stands looking through the thicket. He points his arrow at the brightest of the group—he is a sure marksman and he aims to shoot the fastest speed! Hush now. The quick feet have stopped and the locks toss no more in the wind. Laughter has gone out of the hall. Death in the summer house!

Here is a father in midlife. His coming home at night is the signal for mirth. The children rush to the door and to the books on the evening stand, and the hours pass away on glad feet. There is nothing wanting in that home. Religion is there and sacrifices on the altar morning and night. You look in that household and say, "I can't see what you have to boast of. I do not really believe the world is so sad a place as some people describe it to be." The scene changes. Father is sick. The doors must be kept shut. The deathwatch chirps dolefully on the hearth. The children whisper and weep and cry, once they romped. Passing the house late at night, you see the quick glancing of lights from room to room. It is all over! Death in the summer house!

Here is an aged mother—aged, but not infirm. You think you will have the joy of caring for her, but alas! She is old and she goes from house to house, to children and grandchildren, her coming is a dropping of sunlight in the dwelling. Your children see her coming through the lane, and they cry, "Grandmother's come!" Care for you has gone to the bottom of many a deep wrinkle, and her back stoops with carrying your burdens. Some day she is very quiet. She says she is not sick, but something tells you you will not much longer have a mother. She will sit with you no more at the table nor at the hearth. Her soul has gone to the beyond, do not exactly know the moment of its going. Fold the hands that have done so many kindnesses for you right over the heart that has bent with love toward you since before you were born. Let the pilgrim rest; his weary, Death in the summer house!

Gather about us what we will of comfort and luxury. When the pale messenger comes, he does not stop to look at the architecture of the house before he comes in, nor, entering, does he wait to examine the pictures we have gathered on the wall, or the bed on which you pillow. He does not stop to see whether there is color in the cheek or gentleness in the eye or intelligence in the brow. But what of that? Must we stand forever mourning among the graves of our dead? No! The people in Babylon bring cages of birds to the graves of their dead, and then they open the cages and the birds go singing heavenward. So I would bring to the graves of your dead all bright thoughts and congratulations and hymns that sing of victory and redemption. I stand on the bottom of the grave, and it breaks through into the light and the glory of heaven. The ancients used to think that the straits entering the Red sea were very dangerous places, and they supposed that the wrecked ships and the bodies of the straits would be destroyed, and they were in the habit of putting on weeds of mourning for those who had gone on that voyage, as though they were actually dead. Do you know what they called those straits? They called them the "Gate of Tears."

After the sharpest winter the spring discounts from the shoulder of a southern gale and puts its warm hand upon the earth, and in its palm there comes the grass, and there comes the flowers, and God reads over the poetry of bird and brook and bloom and pronounces it very good. What, my friends, if every winter had not its spring, and every night its day, and every gloom its glow, and every bitter now its sweet hereafter! If you have been on the sea, you know, as the ship passes in the night, there is a phosphoric track left behind it, and as the water rolls up they toss with unimagined splendor. Well, across this great ocean of human troubles Jesus walks. Oh, that in the phosphorescent track of His feet we might all follow and be illumined!

There was a gentleman in a rail car who saw in that same car three passengers of very different circumstances. The first was a maniac. He was carefully guarded by his attendants. His mind like a ship dismantled, was beating against a dark, desolate coast, from which no help could come. The train stopped and the man was taken out into the asylum to waste away perhaps through years of gloom. The second passenger was a culprit. The outraged law had seized on him. As the car joined the chains rattled. On his face were crime, depravity and despair. The train halted, and he was taken out to the penitentiary, to which he had been condemned. There was the third passenger, under far different circumstances. She was a bride. Every hour was being won with her. Her face glittered as beckoned. Her companion was taking her to her father's house. The train halted. The old man was there to welcome her to her new home, and his white locks snowed down upon her as he sealed his word with a father's kiss. Quick-ly we fly toward eternity. We will soon be there. Some leave this life condemned culprits, and they refuse to pardon. Oh, may it be with us that, leaving this fleeting life for the next, we may find our Father ready to greet us as we enter the hall. Let us glitter as beckoned. Let us be ready to receive the bride. Father's welcome! Father's blessing! Father's kiss! Heave! Heave!