

BY ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

Wherever on far distant farms
The orchard trees lift bounteous arms,
The lane is grape-leaved, woodland dense,
The chipmunk leaps the zigzag fence,
The horses from the plow's last round
Drink with a deep, sweet, cooling sound,
And with the soft young moon afloat
Comes up the frogs' heart-easing note,
And tree-loads' endless melody,
Oh, that is home,
Is restful home to me.

Whenever on a distant street
Two charming eyes I chance to meet,
The look of one who knows the grace
Of every change on nature's face,
Whose seelike soul is open wide
To breezes from the farther side,
Whose voice and movement seem to give
The knowledge of how best to live
And how to live most happily,
Oh, that is home,
Is blessed home to me.
—Youth's Companion.

THE PARSONS PLACE.

By Annie Hamilton Donnell.

THE girl's eyes followed the train wistfully, until only a film of smoke was left hanging in the air. Then she turned and faced the desolate little station.

"I believe I'm marooned!" she groaned. "There isn't a soul in—yes, there's a boy. Have I got to ask him for help?"

The boy was brown—very brown. His trousers were crammed carelessly into big top boots, and the boots were muddy. The boy was big and awkward and bashful. He sidled away down the deserted platform, as if to escape as soon as possible. He did not look up once.

"Oh, wait! Please wait a moment!" the girl cried, hastily. "There's nobody else to ask. Won't you please tell me if this is Cutler? I'm afraid I got off at the wrong place."

The boy's abrupt stop and the girl's impetuous chase had brought them close together—too close for the dainty summer skirts. The girl involuntarily twitched them away from contact with the big, muddy boots. She did not see the blood rush to the boy's tanned face, staining it a rich mahogany hue.

"Have I made a mistake? Oh, I hope I have—no, I guess I don't mean that, but it's so—so dreadful here!"

"This is Cutler!" the boy muttered, stiffly. "But it's not the village. That's over there four miles." He pointed with his thumb.

"Four miles! Then there must be a stage. I don't see any. Oh, it hasn't gone, has it?"

"There isn't any stage that meets this train. There's one in the morning."

"Not any stage!" The girl's voice showed distress. A trail of muddy roadway stretched away before her, and her eyes followed it despairingly.

Terry Quinn's heart melted. "How far are you calculating to go? I don't know but I could take you a piece," he said, suddenly. "I live this side of the village a little way."

"I am going to the Parsons place. Do you know where it is?" The Parsons place! A picture of it, abandoned and forlorn, rose before the boy, and he contrasted it mentally with the beautiful, delicate girl before him.

"Yes, I know where it is," he said. "You can go along with me if you want to. I have got a load of grain, so I shall have to go slow."

"Oh, I don't mind going slow!" the girl cried, gratefully. "You are very kind."

An old farm wagon, loaded with grain bags, stood near. She had hard work to clamber up to its high seat. They rattled away down the muddy road, lurching into ruts and swaying over stones. The girl's eyes grew wide with alarm.

Terry Quinn sat on the edge of his seat, and gazed straight ahead in an agony of bashfulness. At intervals he slipped a little farther away from the dainty figure beside him, until the vacant space on the seat had widened absurdly.

He was sure the girl was laughing at it. He was sure she was afraid of his muddy boots and coarse clothes. Suppose he spilled her out! Suppose she got her skirts all floury from the bags! Suppose she wanted to talk!

The girl sat looking down the road. Her sweet face grew more sober every minute. She was thinking of her mother and Molly and the unknown Parsons place. At last she could bear it no longer.

"Is it—nice?" she asked, suddenly, startling the color into the boy's brown face. The Parsons place, I mean?"

Terry had the dismal picture still in his mind. The Parsons place was unrepainted, uninhabited. He remembered the tall weeds and grass in the dooryard, and the broken windows and the gate that sagged on its hinges. For ten years the Parsons place had been abandoned.

"Is it painted white, with green blinds?" the girl persisted. "Are there beautiful trees? And rosebushes? Is there a view? I shall be so glad if there's a piazza! We could wheel mother's couch out on it, and she could lie there all the pleasant days and get well. That's what we're

coming here for. The doctors said she—could not be any better in the city. It's awful in the city in summer."

The boy made no answer, and attributing his silence to bashfulness, she continued:

"This place—the Parsons place—was left to us a year ago in a will. Now that mother is sick, we are very glad of it, because the doctors say she must be in the country. I've come to see about getting the house opened and aired. Then I'm going back for them all."

"Where were you expecting to stop to-night?" questioned the boy, awkwardly. She turned upon him in puzzled wonder at the question.

"Why, at the hotel, I suppose. I hadn't thought, but that's where I shall go, of course. Is it near the Parsons place?"

Terry Quinn felt a wild desire to laugh. The idea of a hotel near the Parsons place was too much for him. But a side glance at the wistful, girlish face sobered him.

"There isn't any hotel hereabouts," he said.

"No hotel? Why, I thought of course— Oh, I don't see what I am going to do!"

"Mother'll take you in, I guess," interrupted Terry, hurriedly. "We live close by. She'll see to you. Mother's great."

In the instant of offering the girl the hospitality of his own home, another idea had occurred to Terry Quinn. He sat on the edge of his seat, driving the old white mare at a snail's pace, and thought it all out to his satisfaction.

It was growing late. The soft June dusk was settling over the land. The girl's impatience nearly asserted itself. It would be so late to see the Parsons place!

"We've got the key at our house," Terry announced, with startling abruptness. "We've always kept it. You'd better not try to go down to the house till to-morrow. It—it needs daylight to see it anyways well. Mother'll go along with you in the morning. Mother's great."

He had said that before. The girl smiled to herself wearily.

They were jogging by a little unrepainted, uninhabited house set in weeds and neglect. The girl shuddered.

"Oh, I hope it won't look like that! That's dreadful!" she said. "If it looks like that I think I shall—cry!"

Terry whipped up the old white mare hastily, and drove away from the dreary place. In another five minutes he had stopped in front of a cheerful little house hugged by vines and roses. His mother was in the dooryard.

"Oh, yes, she's 'great!'" the girl thought, as she lay upstairs in a big, soft bed. "She's beautiful. She helps out the Parsons place, no matter what it's like. And that boy—well, he's pretty nice, even if he is muddy outside."

Don'tstairs Terry and his mother were talking things over. Mrs. Quinn approved of the plan, but was not three o'clock earlier than need be?

"It'll need all that time," the boy said. "I guess you haven't been down to the Parsons place very lately, mother. It's a sight."

"Yes, I know. Poor dear, it was a mercy she did not know it to-night!"

At three o'clock the next morning the boy and the birds were up. Terry went straight to the Parsons place, encumbered with a scythe and a rake and various other tools.

He whistled under his breath till he got past the house; then he broke out into clear, shrill melody. The birds answered jubilantly.

For an hour, two hours, the boy toiled. Gradually the unkempt little front yard took on a kind of trimness. The tall weeds and grassblades fell before the sturdy swing of the scythe, and the straggling bushes began to look more neat. There were left untouched only the flaunting hollyhocks and bouncing-bets.

"They're too pretty to cut down," thought Terry. "Maybe she'll like 'em. I do."

The precious time sped by, but Terry had made his plans carefully. He righted the sagging gate. He raked up the grass and concealed it beneath the

bushes. He even had time to mend some of the broken windows.

And as a finishing touch he painted the brown old pump a marvelous, celestial blue! That was his final triumph. He stood back and gazed entranced at the work of his brush.

"It looks great," he muttered, "but I hope she won't want a drink. It's got a heap of drier in it, but it won't dry as quick as that. There's mother blowing the horn! I've got to hurry home to breakfast."

Mrs. Quinn went with the girl to the Parsons place. In her crisp starched sunbonnet and print dress she plodded heavily beside the slender, girlish figure.

All things were favorable this morning. Nature abetted the boy in his kind little plan. What had looked dreary and unattractive the previous night looked bright and pleasant under the spell of the clear, new day. And the girl did not recognize the Parsons place in its new dress. She thought she had never seen it before.

"What a queer little place!" she said, as they approached it. "But it looks as if somebody cared for it. I rather like it."

"That's the Parsons place," said Mrs. Quinn.

"The Parsons place? This? Oh! Oh, I thought it would be—different! I didn't know it was going to be little and—queer."

She gazed about her almost in horror. But gradually the neat yard and trimmed bushes—the bouncing bets and the nodding hollyhocks—appealed to her. The little place grew pleasanter to her, and she nodded slowly.

"But I rather like it," she said. "It looks as if somebody cared—not lonely and neglected like one I saw last night. Oh, I couldn't have borne that! Yes, I like the flowers and the bushes—there's a shady place for mother's couch. Molly could keep house over there, among those thick bushes. There could be soft, full curtains at the windows and chairs set round in the yard, and the air is wonderfully sweet."

But oh! but oh, the pump! Was anything ever bluer? The girl went cautiously up to the brilliant apparition, but Mrs. Quinn called her back in a panic.

"Look out!" she warned. "Terry's just—I mean somebody's just been painting that. You'll get all blued up, my dear!"

Terry had just—somebody had just been painting the pump! Queer! Queer anybody should take pains to paint an abandoned pump!

"But it isn't so queer as the pump itself," the girl thought. "I don't wonder that somebody took pains! I wonder if it could have been—I believe it was! And the grass, of course he cut that. That's why it's so short." She wheeled and faced Mrs. Quinn with shining eyes.

"I believe somebody has done all this!" she cried. "I believe it was your boy!"

"Terry's a good boy," murmured his mother, smiling.

"He's 'great,'" the girl said, with an unsteady little laugh, "but I don't believe he'd want me to thank him—"

"No!" Mrs. Quinn cried, with gentle emphasis. "Dear heart, no, Terry wouldn't!"

"Then you must do it for me. Tell him it has made all the difference in the world. Tell him I like the Parsons place—and the pump is beautiful! I never knew what the country was like before, or a country boy. I'm glad I know now!"

The sweet June days fled by in their tender, lingering way. Before they were quite gone the invalid mother was at the Parsons place, and already her thin cheeks were taking a faint hint of color from the wonderful country air. Molly was housekeeping under the syringas, and the girl was housekeeping in-doors. The Parsons place was alive again.

Down the road a little way Terry whistled cheerfully about his homely work, and grew browner still. He had forgotten that he had ever done anything to help anybody, but the girl did not forget it.—Youth's Companion.

Betrayed by Golden Locks.

A prominent public official began to show signs of baldness, and then rather surprised his friends by appearing with a sleek, well-groomed crop of dark hair. For some time no one suspected a wig. But a few days ago he appeared with the top of his head covered with the usual dark brown hair, but a sharp line, from the tips of the ears, marked a strong contrast, for the hair below the line was of the bright golden hue which is the pride of the "chemical blondes."

It was found out that the man found his natural hair was turning gray and desired to make it match the wig, so he invested in a preparation warranted to darken the hair, and in the secret of his own room applied it. But, owing to some strange chemical combination, instead of making the silvered hair dark it made the dark hair golden, and so far the unfortunate man has found nothing that will counteract the striking contrast, so he is compelled to endure no small amount of chaffing from his friends.—Philadelphia Record.

The Unattainable.

The man for the average woman is the man she can get.—New York Press.



State Roads.

The new law providing for the building of State roads will be of incalculable benefit to Rhode Island if the members of the board appointed a few days ago investigate the subject thoroughly and submit a practical scheme of highway improvement to the Legislature. It should be understood that the law was passed in the interest of the entire State and not for the purpose of constructing roads off the main routes, and it is important to exclude politics from the deliberations of the commission and to guard against repetition of the costly errors made a few years ago, when the Legislature appropriated money for samples of macadam. The value of good roads is so generally conceded that there is no occasion for building isolated stretches of macadam; every dollar should be expended on main roads connecting Providence and the important centres of population, and if the board proves that it is capable of resisting the clamorous politicians who are anxious to have the State pay for local jobs of doubtful merit the Legislature doubtless will be inclined to provide funds for the work outlined in the law enacted just before adjournment.

The Commissioners cannot be expected to render the State the best service if they do not have the advice of a capable engineer. Laymen cannot decide all the questions pertaining to modern road building. It is the business of the engineer to examine materials and to see that they are properly used. Very frequently poor work has been done when all the conditions were favorable for good macadam work, and with the knowledge now available there is no excuse for wasting money. Cities and engineers indispensable, and the State should be governed by the experience of progressive municipalities and obtain the services of an authority on road building and maintenance. By no means the least important part of a general plan of State roads is the establishment of moderate grades. In Rhode Island there should be few grades exceeding three per cent. In mountainous localities three per cent. roads have been laid out where a few years ago it was thought impossible to keep grades under eight or ten per cent., and there is no reason why this engineering performance cannot be duplicated in this State. So much has been written and said about road building that the commission can offer no adequate excuse for not proceeding on the right lines, and the public will be grievously disappointed if the recommendations made at the next session of the Legislature do not appeal to every man of common sense who is interested in a comprehensive system of State highways.—Providence Journal.

Praise For the Corn Belt Roads.

Whenever Professor Ira O. Baker takes time to write a paper on the subject of improved roads, that paper is fairly certain to be interesting reading. Why it is that the idea of a good broken stone or gravel highway so arouses his ire, the Engineering Record cannot state. The fact remains, however, that "the good roads enthusiast who writes so glibly that the condition of the road indicates the state of civilization and who reiterates the praises of the stone roads of France and England" is an ill informed man in the eyes of this well known personage. He has again drawn attention to this bias of mind by an entertaining paper on "Civilization and Wagon Roads," presented at the recent meeting of the Illinois Society of Engineers and Surveyors. It is hardly necessary to state that the contention of the existence of any intimate present relation between civilization and good roads was vigorously combated in the essay in question. The author showed by statistics from an unmentioned source that France spends on highways nearly four times as much per mile of road as Illinois, three and one-half as much per square mile and about the same per capita, yet she has only one mile of roads to each 0.66 square miles of area, while Illinois has a mile for every 0.53 square mile. People who have but a moderate personal acquaintance with the highways of the two territories will feel that here is a case where figures are trying hard to prove the inaccuracy of the old adage to the effect that they can be classed with the youthful George Washington of cherry tree reputation.—Engineering Record.

Their Importance to a County.

C. M. Kimbrough, of Muncie, Ind., is of the opinion that, next to schoolhouses, good roads are the most important need to a county. "Judge Taft," he said, "a few days ago, in giving information before the Senate committee as to the condition of the people in the Philippines, said that they had no roads; that almost their sole means of intercommunication was by water, and their civilization, whatever they have, is close to the water courses. Now, we

know something about the state of civilization in the Philippines as compared with that of other and older countries. In Cuba one of the first things toward our Government as a means toward civilizing of its people was toward appropriation which was applied to building of highways, so that the people could come together, could communicate and exchange commodities and ideas."

France's Fine Highways.

As early as 1867, the improved macadamized highways of France had a total length of 200,951 miles, while the length of unfinished highway was stated at 174,667 miles, most of which is now finished.

ONE OF NATURE'S WONDERS.

The Stone Woman of Wingen, in South Wales.

In New South Wales, near Wingen, natural curiosity is observable. It is an object popularly known as the Stone Woman of Wingen. The stone woman of enormous dimensions sits with her back against the cliff, her head separated from the top and feet hidden among the trees which grow up to the bottom of the cliff.

On her knee there is resting an open book, which she is not reading, but instead is gazing forever with a steadfast, unchanging look down the beautiful valley of the Hunter. From the feet of the stone woman rest among the towering trees that grow around the base of Salisbury Crags, the summit of her head must be about 800 feet high. If the proper point of view be chosen the pose of the figure is perfect in its magnificent simplicity.

At Wingen also is to be seen the burning mountain, to be found in Australia, and the only one of volcanic origin known. The summit is 1820 feet above sea level, and it is easily reached from the township. It is supposed to be an immense coal seam, which in some unaccountable way became ignited and has been burning ever since. When first discovered, during the early days of settlement, the aboriginals of the district explained, in their own rude fashion, that the mountain had been burning in the days of the forefathers; that, as far back as they could remember there had always been the big smoke.

The course of the fire can be traced a considerable distance by the transverse rents or chasms occasioned by the falling in of the ground, from under which the coal had been consumed. From year's end to year's end clouds of smoke are continually issuing from the sides of the mountains, some of which is in many places covered with a sulphurous deposit. In the vicinity of the openings from which the bluish rings of smoke issue the ground is hot to the touch, the vegetation which it was originally covered has disappeared, and sticks thrust into the ground speedily become charred, if ignited.—St. James's Gazette.

The Whistler's Rights.

Etiquette in street cars is a very undetermined quantity. Whether a man should give up his seat to a woman on all occasions, or to a woman, or to pretty women, or to a woman, or to women with luggage, or to women with children, or to gentlemen, has been discussed ad infinitum. Despite the argument that a tired man is as tired as a tired woman, there are still those who rise to question the preference. Questions of etiquette are not easily settled. Recently two men, unknown to each other, were standing side by side on the platform of a street car. One was whistling vigorously so close to the ear of the other that the other cast frequent glances of annoyance in the direction from which the sound came, and shrugged his shoulders with evident discomfort. For a long while the whistler exercised his whistle without restraint, appearing not to notice the annoyed glances directed toward him. When he had finished off "Van Winkle Was a Lucky Man," with shrill, exultant bravado, he turned upon his neighbor and said: "You don't seem to like my whistling?"

"No," came the frank answer of the man well known to the world of readers. "I don't."

"May be you think you are enough to stop it?"

"No," was the reply. "but I hope you are."—The Great Round World.

Rebuilding Peking.

Peking is being rebuilt, says the Hongkong Press. The whole Legation quarter is all but unrecognizable to those who knew the city only a year ago. The most striking street improvement is in the thoroughfare which is flanked by the British, Russian, Japanese and Italian Legations. At the north end buildings which cross between bastions and gates have been put up, thus preventing a possible enemy again enfolding the whole roadway from the wall of the Imperial City.