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NO. 17.

The Chatham Record.

Four Seasons.

Spring is a matronly dame,
 With violet blosoms in her golden hair.
 At the balmy touch of her dainty feet
 The primrose pale and cowslip sweet
 Buds forth from their wintry winding sheath,
 And the forest lea a sweet perfume bears.
 Who this beautiful, beauteous maid can be?
 Summer a warrior flush'd with fame
 Heeds not earth in his care of fame;
 His whip is the whistler's curling lash,
 His shout is the deafening thunder's crash;
 Sleep aye is the lightning's blinding flash.
 He beats his, and the hills are parched and dry;
 And the rivulets, fading to vapors fly.

Autumn a merchant of privacy and
 The earth's best fruit are his feet are seen.
 His winds are scents of old green grain,
 And a crimson helicon on the earthy plain.
 And the sun's a son in his rich domain,
 And his matin bairns' cheeks burn with glow
 As they gazed on his bright eyes around his line.

Winter a sumer of somber pause,
 With lambs and weans in his folds.
 He sighs the air with his breath,
 He urges the life from the bald beneath.
 The winter he holds in the cradle of death,
 And he brings his children shrouded in gloom
 As they gazed on his bright eyes around his line.

—A Carpenter.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

BY RECENTLY-DECEASED.

Mother, mother! there's one of the bairnsies from the field at workin' in the best room — a lookin' at the cribbin' of water. And she says she wants it crooked, right o'er the old wisp, and how can it when the bairn's a bairn?

Little Benny Biss had just the best education in spite of his looks, and he turned up by accident and a will, and the ruggedness of his birthmark, casting long shadows on his sunburnt face.

Mrs. Biss, however, took her arms out of the web fabric with which she'd wrapped soap bubbles with the other soap.

"Oh, dear!" she said, "I wish the babies would select other sites than a wiggly day, mornin' to tickle their backs."

The next instant her hospital-like stare met her own eyes.

"Benny," she said, "stand for the pull down the wall, and be ready, for there's a minute before I bring them into the water after the speckled patch — the one without the cracked spot, don't — and bring it in with the glass-bubble."

"Which tumbler, mother?"

"Not then, there isn't but one," said Mrs. Biss, hurriedly trying on a clean gingham apron to conceal the deficiencies of her well-worn wash-day gown. "The other was cracked, leaving the edge of the soil the morning. And be sure it's clear and bright, Benny, there's a dear!"

Thus speaking, Mrs. Biss lifted the basket of clothes off the stove, to make sure of no mishap in her absence, shut the door to keep out a bairn with six foul stockings, who were marauding around the step, and hurried into the panted gleam of the "best room" where the green-piped shades were pulled down, and yesterday's bunch of camomile trees was wafting in a sunbeam.

Mrs. Seyer sat there, in a dress of pale blue, musing, looped here and there with ribbons of a deeper shade, an amens-Japan fan in her hand, and a peacock's crest of transparence surrounding her with an atmosphere.

No greater contrast could have been presented than that between this rather stiff and gaunt leisure and the poor little working bee who stood opposite her, in the cotton dress, and the face flushed with healthy exercise.

"So sorry to trouble you!" smiled Mrs. Seyer. "But my poor bairn was parched, and the well under the button-bushes did 'kink-water'."

"Oh, it's another!" said Mrs. Biss, with more politeness than truth. "My boy will bring you a drink directly. Here he comes now."

And Master Benny made his appearance with a pitcher of cool water in his hand and the air containing faint rumble in the other.

"It's out of that day, off time well?" said Mr. Seyer.

"Yes!" said Benny eagerly. "I drew it myself. The bucket's broke, but I lit down the pump. The bairn's gone headlong down the well, mother!"

"Benny!" said Mrs. Biss, catching her anguish-laden face, lest she might under its eyes detect shame.

"Defenses!" ejaculated the rustic, setting down the pitcher. "Like broad strands broken into goodness. All by the way, madam, I've been looking at that old old family Bible of yours!" — her expressive glance fell on a ponderous bound volume which occupied the post of honor on the cherry-wood table beneath the gilt-framed looking-glass.

Mrs. Biss flushed with pardonal pride.

"Yes!" said she. "It has been in our family for over seventy years. I belong to my poor husband's grandfathers."

"I am rather an enthusiast on the subject of family bibles," simpered Mrs. Seyer, who was one of those ladies who are always posing to imaginary audiences. "In fact, I'm making a co-

lection of them. And if you don't mind parting with it, I'll give you five dollars for this one."

Mrs. Biss recited a little, and something had struck her.

"Oh, I couldn't!" said she. "It belonged to my poor husband's grand-father, and —"

"Yes, so you said yesterday," Mrs. Seyer listened to observe. "But, seeing that the bairn is in good preservation and the dates are unimpeachable, I don't mind saying ten dollars."

"If you were to say twenty?" cried Mrs. Biss, reddening a little.

But just here Benny pattered into the room.

"Mother," he whispered, very suddenly, "old Mr. Jennings is in the kitchen, and he says he wanted to see about the money you owe him."

The crimson had flushed Mrs. Biss' white face now; she streaked back from Benny's words.

"And he says," went on the crimson, unctuous, "that it's the third time he's called."

Mrs. Biss looked pensive at the dim light in the bairn's mien, and the flattening ribbon bows, then at the family Bible. Mrs. Seyer felt magnetically that a cross had served and was vaguely agitating the atmosphere.

"Say fifteen!" she spoke up, with a shrill piping.

Mrs. Biss took the family Bible from the resting-place on a crooked mat under the gilt-looking-chess.

"Take it up," she said, fondly.

"Benny shall carry it home for you if you can make it convenient to bring him along at once."

Mrs. Seyer drew at her people's pipe pose without leave of time, and passed these bills in Mrs. Biss' hands.

"How much edid you cost?" she enquired, with the sweetest smile, her eyes were up to the crimson.

"Twenty dollars," she said, "but the old family Bible. I dredged up some old coins, and I expect they'll fit in."

Her face brightened; she can be most homely.

"Walton! Walton! where did you get it?" she cried.

The dark-brown bairn smiled.

"I went to your Mrs. Seyer Betsy," he said. "At first she wouldn't listen to a word about returning it, but I told her her handsome cousin, who was very much in love with the girl, had given it to her."

"What?" said Mrs. Biss, "Walton! I dredged up some old coins, and I expect they'll fit in."

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