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Since Life is Fleet.

Fill the swift years full, my dear,
Since life is fleet;
Love, and hold love fast, my dear,
He is so sweet;
Sweetest, dearest, fleetest comer,
Fledgling of the sudden summer.

Love, but not too well, my dear,
When skies are gray,
And the autumn winds are here,
Love will away;
Fleetest, vagnest, farthest rover,
When the summer's warmth is over.

—[Louise Chandler Moulton.

TOM, DICK AND HARRY.

BY ANNA SHELLS.

I am Tom! Dick is my brother, and we are the orphaned sons of Richard Hope, who went down with the Saucy Jane with his wife and the fortune he had made in California, when we were but six years old. We were twins, and clinging to each other, were picked up by a passing steamer and carried to New York. I was old enough to know and tell that we were going to visit our aunt, Mrs. Dresdale of Oakhill, and kindly strangers saw that we arrived there safely, forlorn little orphan beggars. But fresh misfortune met us, for our aunt died one week after she gave us a tearful welcome.

We had no real claim upon Cyrus Dresdale, being only his wife's nephews, but out of his great generous heart he gave us the place of sons in his home. Dear Uncle Cy! Never were boys made happier than he made us for four years, sending us to school and giving us every pleasure boys delight in, and, above all, such loving companionship as few enjoy, even with their own father.

Then the change came. Uncle Cy married again, and his wife could not endure to have two great rude boys about the house. Every day, every hour, we committed some unpardonable offense, and found all pleasures restricted. First, our ponies were sold; then our rabbits and guinea-pigs were killed; then we were moved from our large, beautiful room to a miserable little attic where we baked in summer and froze in winter.

Uncle Cyrus stood by us as far as his quiet, peace-loving disposition allowed, but his new wife ruled with a rod of iron, and, at last, seeing we could not please her, he sent us to boarding-school. Home-sick for a week, we were thoroughly happy afterward, and wanted for no pleasure Uncle Cy could give us. I cannot dwell too long on our boy-life, but we, Dick and myself, can never forget the kindness of Uncle Cyrus Dresdale. We came to Oakhill sometimes for a brief holiday, and this brings me to Harry.

Harriet Dresdale was the only child of our dear Uncle Cyrus, and was born just one year after his second marriage. It was uncle himself who gave her her nickname, greatly to Mrs. Dresdale's disgust, but, as he said:

"Really, my dear, I must complete the trio, Tom, Dick and Harry."

We were twenty-one years of age when Uncle Cyrus took us into his study one morning and made a brief speech that I shall never forget.

"My dear boys," he said, "for you are as dear to me as sons, and have made me proud of you many times, I must send you away once more. We will not talk about the reason, but you know it is not because I do not love you. You have good education, good morals, and I am not afraid to trust you. You, Tom, will practice your profession, and Dick can go into business, since he wishes it; but you will each find ten thousand dollars in the G—— Bank that is your own. It will keep you from want until you make more by your own talents and exertions. Come sometimes to see me; do not forget that I love you."

He broke down there and we hung about him as if we were still little boys, full of love and gratitude, and keenly aware of the cruelty of separating us from him.

Off to the great city, where Dick opened a drug-store and I put out a doctor's sign. We had both studied medicine, but Dick would not practice. His was a delicate, sensitive nature, most unlike my own, and he could not bear the sight of suffering. We were unlike in all things, and no one would have guessed we were twins. I was tall, strong and dark, not in the least handsome. Dick was slender and fair, with a rare beauty of face and a gentleness that was almost womanly.

We had been seven years in the city and once more were at home at Oakhill, when we could spare a vacation, for Mrs. Dresdale was dead. There was nothing said, there could not be, but we knew that we were welcome, and we stole many a day to run down to visit dear Uncle Cyrus, and, it must be told, fell in love with Harry. Can I make you see her, this cousin who was not our cousin? Brown, curling hair shaded a face of pure oval shape with delicate, regular features. Great blue eyes, soft, wistful, innocent as a babe's, lighted her beauty, and her smiles displayed perfect teeth. She was not tall, but her figure was graceful and prettily rounded, and her hands and feet were dainty as a fairy's.

She was frank and sisterly with us and always gave us cordial welcome, and we never guessed each other's devotion, because we could not well leave the city at the same time, Dick leaving me in charge of his store and clerks, and taking my practice in return.

Not until Uncle Cyrus died did we know that we both loved Harry, and then a crushing blow fell. For it was found, after our uncle was buried, that he had left nothing of a once noble fortune. Nothing for the delicately nurtured child who had never known a wish ungratified. Harry's aunt, Mrs. Leyburn, took her home, and the beautiful house at Oakhill was sold. After all the confusion was over and there came a breathing spell, Dick took me into his confidence.

Like blows from a hammer his words fell on my heart.

"Tom," he said to me, "I have been over to see Harry. Poor little girl, she is very miserable. All her bright, pretty smiles are gone, Tom. It would make your heart ache to see how pale and sad she is."

Ah! Had it not already made my heart ache?

"She has lost the kindest father, Dick," I said.

"And, as if that was not sorrow enough," said Dick, "they are not kind to her at Leyburn's."

"Not kind to her!" I cried. "I thought they fairly worshiped her."

"So they did when they thought Uncle Cyrus was wealthy. Now they tell her every day that she must find something to do—some work to earn a living."

"Never!" I cried. "Why, Dick, we owe everything to Uncle Cyrus and we are not poor men now."

Then Dick said, in a faltering voice:

"Do you think, Tom, it is too soon after her loss for me to tell Harry how I love her—to ask her to be my wife?"

The room seemed to be reeling around me; Dick's face grew dim; his voice sounded far away. He loved Harry! And I was only waiting until the first bitterness of her grief was over to ask her to be my wife. Fool that I was! What was my homely face compared to Dick's beauty; my quiet ways against his grace and tenderness? Before he spoke again I had recovered from the shock his words gave me, and resolved to keep my secret. Let him win her if he could. I dared not think of my own chance if she refused him. Time enough for that.

Day after day he sought her, yet kept silent. Little guessing the torture he inflicted, he told me of his wrong, but ever with the same restrain.

"She gives me no chance to tell her how I love her, Tom! She is like a sister, only."

I kept away, but my hope grew stronger. If she loved Dick as a sister, might it not be that I—homely and quiet as I was—had won the deeper love I craved. My patience must have been great in those days. Every lonely hour was filled with dreams of Harry's fair, sweet face, her low, musical voice, her bright, winning grace. I recalled every loving word she had ever spoken to me, every caress she had given to me. I knew that even in her childhood I had given her more than a brother's love, and I saw that her mother had dreaded lest she should love one of the penniless boys who were so dear to their adopted uncle.

We had begun, Dick and myself, to turn some of our investments into ready money, to make a fund for Harry.

"She shall have the twenty thousand uncle gave us," we said, although it would cripple us somewhat for a time to take so large a sum out of our fortunes. Nothing had been said to her, for we were afraid she would refuse to take it. We waited for Dick to speak, but we gathered the money together in bank.

It may have been the longing for a home that first suggested to us the idea of investing part of Harry's money (we always spoke of it as hers) in a house and some furniture, each hoping to share it with her. The first real brightness that came into her dear face after her father died was when we told her we were going to housekeeping, and begged her to help us select and furnish a home. Again, I starved my own heart, and sent her with Dick house-hunting, until they selected a house that seemed the perfection of a modest home, most unlike the beautiful Oakhill mansion. But it was Harry's own taste that selected the furniture, suited to the small rooms, but good in quality, and Harry said: "Ever so pretty!"

"It was all ready and paid for, and five thousand dollars still in bank, when we all went over to admire the final effect.

We were standing in the pretty parlor when Harry said, softly:

"I hope this will be a happy home for you, boys, and that there will soon be the sweetest of wives to share it with you. And now, today, you must give me your good wishes, too. I am going to be married."

"Married!"

Who said it? The voice was choked and very hoarse. Not mine; surely not Dick's.

"Papa knew," said Harry; "but we were to wait until Charlie was a little more prosperous. I was not sure" and Harry's eyes dropped—"whether my loss of fortune would not make me less attractive to Charlie, but I wronged him. We will be very poor, but I hope I can help him, and we have made up our minds not to wait for money. Some day we may invite you to our house, but in the meantime you will come to see us where we are boarding, will you not?"

I answered, pitying the ghastly white face that Dick had turned to the window. And I continued my answer by asking:

"Who is Charlie? You forget we have not seen him, nor, indeed, even you as much as we would have wished."

"Charlie Foster, a clerk in a bank. Dick has met him."

"Yes," Dick answered, in a low voice. "A fine fellow he is, too, Harry. Come, Tom, we must be going."

Not a word was spoken until we stood face to face in our own room. Then Dick looked me in the eyes.

"You, too, Tom?" he said. "I never dreamed of that."

"I wanted you should have the first chance, Dick. But it is all over. Shall we take Doctor Morton's office?"

For we had an opening that promised well in another city. It had scarcely been considered, but it came as a relief, and we accepted it. Our wedding present to Harry was the house and the five thousand dollars her father's generous gift to us in the past. It is many long years since that wedding day that we faced manfully, and we are rich men—Dick and myself. But we never married, and our money will go to Harriet Foster's three boys, Tom, Dick and Harry.—[The Ledger.

Chinese Truck Farms.

Rev. I. D. Kelsey, of Montana, has written an interesting article in reference to Chinese truck farms in that state. He says there are some fifty farms carried on by this class of people in and around Helena, the farms varying in extent from one-fifth of an acre up to twenty or thirty acres. In fact these Chinamen have monopolized the small gardening business in and around that city. Their field work is somewhat peculiar, and adapted to a land where rain seldom falls. Everything must be so arranged that it can be irrigated. Where less than half an acre is under cultivation, the Chinese use hand-sprinklers. Frequently they rent a few acres from a man who has an unquestioned water right, survey the land carefully, and bring the water in a ditch to the highest point of the patch. From these they conduct the water in smaller ditches anywhere they wish, the patch being platted out as regularly as city squares and streets. Each plat is wide enough to be reached half way across by the gardener on one side and by his hired man on the other. The water is run into these ditches and little side branches, and from them to the vegetable beds to soak in until the whole is thoroughly wet, when the water is turned off to another bed, and so on until the whole field is well watered. This requires the time and labor of two Chinamen on a large place.

The rents paid by Chinamen are enormous. They take from three to ten years lease and pay $25 per acre, in lots of ten acres or more.

An Important Animal.

Teacher—John, of what are your shoes made?

Boy—Of leather, sir.

Teacher—Where does the leather come from?

Boy—From the hide of the ox.

Teacher—What animal, then, supplies you with shoes and gives you meat to eat?

Boy—My father.—[New York World.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

OUR NEW COOK.

I had a pain in my forehead,
I had an ache in my thumb,
And, "Oh!" said I,
"I believe I shall cry
To think of the bread and pudding and pie
I must make if the cook doesn't come."

Hark! a rat, tat, tat! On the threshold
A dear little maid stood
In her grandmother's veil,
And offered for sale
Some fresh mud pies in a shabby tin pail
Which she said were exceedingly good.

I bought them and paid her in kisses,
And declare I such a cook I'd employ:
Then she offered to bake a delicious mud cake;
And my forehead and thumb forgot to ache,
As I thought of the feast we'd enjoy.

—[Anna M. Pratt in Youth's Companion.

AFFECTION OF TWO FRENCH HORSES.

Everyone at Brussels will remember two superb white horses whose tails swept the ground, running by the side of each other in the Russian style. Whether driven or ridden they always went together, and were so fond of each other that they could not be separated even to go to the farrier.

For twenty years these two noble animals had never been parted until about three weeks ago, when one of them died.

As soon as his body was lying dead in the stable, his companion became dejected, and, when it was taken away, he refused to eat.

In vain was the attempt made to deceive him by putting another animal at his side, as this was all to no purpose, for he would not touch his oats, and in a week he died.—[Our Dumb Animals.

CAUGHT IN A RAIN STORM.

One beautiful afternoon, two girls, Elsie Hammond and Alice Lee, set out in pursuit of wild flowers. They walked till they came to a wood where the flowers were plentiful, and after picking all that they desired, started for home.

They had not gone far when it commenced to rain, and looking around for shelter they saw something at a little distance which looked like a farm house.

Upon coming nearer they discovered that it was a very old house, which appeared to be entirely deserted. The door, hanging on one hinge, stood invitingly open, and they ran in quickly. If the exterior of the house was forlorn looking the interior was more so, for the walls were decorated with cobwebs, the floors covered with dust, and the panes of window-glass either cracked or broken. There was no furniture in the house, and the girls, looking around, saw a pair of ricketty stairs, and were wondering if anybody had ever gone up them, when to their dismay they heard footsteps approaching.

"Hurry Alice, somebody is coming. Let us run up stairs! Be quick! Oh, I am so frightened!"

Up the stairs ran the girls without looking back, and had barely reached the top when the intruder entered. They crept noiselessly to the corner of the loft, which was very dark, having only one window.

Hearing footsteps beneath, Elsie said: "Oh, I do believe he is coming up stairs!"

"I do not think that he saw us," answered Alice; "but hush, he may hear us."

They heard heavy footsteps below, and then a great noise as if the body had fallen to the floor—then silence. "If we keep perfectly still, he may fall asleep, and then we can get out of here," whispered Alice.

"Perhaps it is a tramp," said Elsie, crying, "and he may come up here and see us, and kill us. O dear! I wish I had not come here. And perhaps we will have to stay here all night. Do you think we could jump out of this window, Alice?"

"Gracious, no; we would surely break our bones and then, besides, he would see us. Oh, I wonder how much longer we must stay here."

Meanwhile the rain fell in torrents, and as it was getting late the girls were more frightened. "Oh, I hear him move. Suppose he should take a notion to come up here," murmured Elsie.

Finally, about six o'clock, the rain stopped. The girls were very hungry, and so frightened that they could scarcely speak. Now they heard steps and held their breath; he was getting up, and then a footstep was heard outside.

Alice ran to the window, and looking out commenced to laugh very heartily. "Come here," she said, but Elsie was loath to leave her corner. "See," she exclaimed, dragging her to the window.

And what do you think she saw? Not a tramp, but a cow that like them had taken refuge from the storm.—[Fall River (Mass.) Premier.

THE FIG TRADE.

Where Figs Come From and How They Are Imported.

California Has a Substitute for the Turkish Fruit.

"I would not give a fig for it." This is an old expression. You hear it every day. It was evidently first used by some one who had the idea that a fig was not a valuable article. One fig is not worth much, but when you realize that the people of the United States pay about $1,000,000 for the figs they consume in a year you will realize that a fig is worth something after all.

Nearly all the figs consumed in this country are imported from Smyrna, Turkey. They grow in clusters on a rather small tree with spreading branches, which, when laden with fruit, often touch the ground. The figs are picked by hand and dried by a process of evaporation. They are then dipped in a solution of sugar, dried again, pared in boxes that contain from one to twenty pounds and then are ready for shipment. These are the better grades of figs. The cheaper grades are shipped in bags and baskets, and after reaching this country are used by candy manufacturers and dealers, who steam them and sort out the best, which they pack into quarter and half-pound boxes. The refuse figs—those not fit for anything else—are ground up and made into "fig paste" and other stuff of the kind. There is also a manufactured fig, which is made out of ground-up figs, grease and sugar. The only things figgy about them are the seeds and the green leaves packed in the boxes with them. The seeds are genuine—the leaves are not.

About fifteen figs make a pound, and about five and a half millions are imported into this country every year. The boxed figs cost the importer from 11 to 15 cents a pound according to the grade. The importer sells them to the jobber, who pays an advance of from one-half to one cent a pound on them. The jobber sells them to the retailer, getting about the same advance in price as the importer. The retailer sells them to the consumers, making the largest profit of all. He gets an advance of from 2 to 5 cents a pound, and sometimes more. Hotels use large quantities of figs. They are served just as they are taken from the box. Dealers in figs have them graded into what they call choice, London layer, and fancy, with prices respectively 14, 18 1-2 and 24 cents.

New York is the greatest distributing point for imported figs, although a large quantity is received through Boston dealers. The duty on figs is now 2 1-2 cents a pound. It was raised a half cent by the McKinley bill. Large quantities are shipped from California, the only place in the country where figs are raised to any extent. Within the last five years the cultivation of figs has become quite an industry in California. There are plenty of fig orchards there and large quantities of figs have been shipped to the East, but there is very little demand for them. They are dry and when packed are very dark blue figs with thick, tough skins and they have scarcely any seeds in them. They taste quite different from the white Smyrna fig.

Fruit dealers say that Californians have not yet learned how to cure figs, but that they are improving, and that it is only a question of time when they will drive the foreign figs out of this market, just as they have driven out prunes and raisins. California consumes most of its own figs. About half a car load—15,000 pounds—was shipped to this city last season. Most of these are still in the hands of the dealers. They have a way of preserving figs out there, and serving them with sugar and cream. This makes a delicious dessert. The California dried figs sell in this market at from 6 to 9 cents a pound. Some enterprising Californian has prepared what is called crystalized figs. They are put through a preserving process and then they are packed loosely in one and two pound boxes. These are the most expensive figs in the market, as they retail for 50 and 90 cents a box. Green figs are considered quite a delicacy in California, where they are eaten like any other fruit, either from the tree or with cream and sugar.—[New York Recorder.

Tricks of Shoplifters.

An old trick, which is now too well known to be practised safely, consists in carrying around a ladies' hat box half of the cover of which is hinged so that it can be lifted up and stolen articles thrust in. A common trick today is to pick up an empty paper bag, such as is used in the store, and distend it by blowing into it, so that it has the appearance of being full. The air is replaced with spoils at leisure.

The shoplifter's pocket is a well-known device. It is made of muslin and was originally so big that, when fastened under the dress at the waist, it reached below her knees. There is a long opening through the dress just below the waistband, sometimes big enough to thrust a baby in. This opening is covered from view by a flap of the waist, which, however, can be lifted up. Sometimes these pockets are found with almost enough merchandise inside to start a small shop. Large pockets are seldom used nowadays, because most stores are so carefully watched that professional shoplifters are perforce contented with smaller daily hauls than formerly. Besides, modern fashions do not permit of the safe gathering of much bulk about the person of the shoplifter.

What do shoplifters do with their spoils when they are so loaded up that walking is uncomfortable? Detective Cutts, who has had a large experience in one of New York's biggest stores, one day followed two women who, he was sure, had been shoplifting for several hours, yet so cleverly that he could not gather evidence enough to warrant their arrest. When they left he followed. They went up a side street and entered one of those side entrances to a saloon leading into a small room partitioned off for women. Quick as a thought Detective Cutts ran in the front door and said to the bartender:

"See here, you know me. Lend me your apron. I want to wait on those women."

Tying on the apron the detective answered the call of the women and served them with beer. He waited a few minutes, and then went in to find them pulling out all sorts of merchandise and making them into bundles.

"Oh," said he, "want any more beer?"

"No," said the women.

"Been shopping I see?"

"Yes."

"Got all those things at the store, eh?"

"Yes, but what's that to you?"

"It's this much to me," said the mock bartender. "I'm the store detective, and I want you to go back with me and pay for them."

Shoplifters who steal for business and take as much as they can get dispose of their stealings about their persons only temporarily while in the store. Once outside, they find some quiet place in which to disgorge, and arrange their stealings, and the private rooms in saloons are very convenient for the purpose.—[New York Sun.

One of Nature's Graveyards.

"The Bad Lands of Dakota," said Prof. J. B. Wilkinson, "are good for nothing on the face of the earth but fossils. It is a fact that every portion of the hills there, however, are absolutely filled with evidences of animal life. Fossil insects, fishes, birds, the bones of the elephant, the mastodon, of the lion, the tiger, and of scores, if not hundreds, of extinct animals and species, are to be found in the same hillside. In one declivity, where the rain had washed away the underlying earth and a heavy slide had occurred, I found in a space not exceeding thirty feet square the fossil remains of seven distinct species of mammals, of seventeen species of fish, and of five varieties of birds, while the shellfish and insect remains were too numerous to count. By what great natural convulsion this district was made the graveyard of millions of animals it is impossible to say, but nothing short of a tremendous and widely extended calamity could, in one comparatively small tract, have destroyed as many animals as must have perished there."—[Globe-Democrat.

Shortest Horse Railway.

The shortest horse railway in the world is probably to be found in New York, along the sunken road that begins at 85th street and Fifth avenue and ends at 86th street and Central Park West, less than half a mile. The line is three avenue blocks long, and consists of a double track. Its equipment is two small cars, two lanky horses, two car hooks and a played-out piece of broom. Two conductors and two drivers man the road, and the fare is five cents, as much as on the elevated or the other horse car lines from the Battery to Harlem, ten miles. From all appearances the line is doing a paying business, it being largely patronized by people in the Eighties on both sides of the Park—[New York Recorder.

My Lost Song.

Once a song came to me 'twas a silvery thing,
All ripples with music, like brooklets in May;
A fragrance breathed through, as of flower-breath sweet,
And light gleamed around it, more glowing than day.

It had come in a dream, and when I awoke
I hastened to write it; for certain I knew
That by it the world would be brought nearer Heaven
And thrilled by a glimpse of the good and the true.

But ere I could put my dream-thought into form,
I lost it, and knew it would never be heard;
For a child, playing near me, had blotted the page,
And I killed my sweet song with a swift angry word!

* * * * * * *

How many such songs are thus lost to the world?
How we fling away gifts that are sent from above,
All because, in our hearts, we are not always ruled
By the master of all that is beautiful—Love.

—[Myrtle Cherryman in Free Press.

HUMOROUS.

A dollar in the pocket is worth two in the hand.

Riches have wings; they are eagle's wings to our coins.

In politics it is always best for a man to refuse what he cannot get.

After a jolly dog has had his day he usually goes to the bow-wows.

It is so much easier to tell people how good they should be than it is to show them.

The man who avoids mistakes by never trying to do anything, makes a big mistake.

It is surprising the amount of trouble a man will endure before it reaches him.

Now that they are making clothes out of wood fiber, a new kind of moth will have to be invented.

At the sea-shore, between the sea swells and the land swells, the landlord's pocketbook swells.

Tommy says that when his teacher is provoked he knows that she is well provided with choler and cuffs.

There's nothing like sticking to a thing when you apply yourself to it, as the fly said when it alighted on the fly-paper.

Judge—And he took you by the throat and choked you, did he? Pat—Yis, sor; he squazed me throat till Oi tho't he'd nick either out of me Adams apple.

Mrs. Slimpurse—What is the price of this suite of furniture? Dignified Clerk—This is not a suite, madam. It is one of our $25 sets. The suites are on another floor—$100 a piece.

A Petrified Salmon.

Henry Benson of Hayden Hill, Lassen County, Cal., has in his possession a specimen of petrified salmon. The former fleshy parts resemble crystalized and variegated quartz, retaining in part the yellowish color of the salmon, and what was formerly the skin of the fish is now a sort of a porcelain as hard as pure white flint. The texture of the entire specimen is that of hardest quartz. It was found on a hillside at about 1500 altitude from the floor of "Big Valley," and was evidently petrified at the point where found. This would indicate that the salmon formerly inhabited the ancient rivers, the beds of which now form parts of the strata of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and in which ancient channels now lie the rich deposits of California's gold.

These ancient river beds, as is well known, are found at various heights above the sea level, and in some places but a few hundred feet below the crests of the highest ranges, and perhaps hundreds of feet below the present formation of the surface of the earth, and running entirely independent of any present formation. To determine with certainty that this salmon inhabited these ancient rivers would be an interesting fact, as it would fix at a much later date than is now generally supposed the geological period when, by mighty upheavals, these old river courses were changed and obliterated from the face of the earth, and gigantic mountains formed in their stead.—[St. Louis Republic.

Keep Busy.

The secret of success in life is to keep busy, to be persevering, patient and untiring in the pursuit or calling you are following. The busy ones may now and then make mistakes, but it is better to risk these than to be idle and inactive. Keep doing, whether it be at work or seeking recreation. Motion is life, and the busiest are the happiest. Cheerful, active labor is a blessing. An old philosopher says: "The firefly only shines when on the wing; so it is with the mind. When once we rest, we darken."—[British Printer.