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Go stand at night upon an ocean craft
And watch the folds of its imperial train
Catching in fleecy foam a thousand glows—
A miracle of fire unquenched by sea.
There, in bewildering turt-necked of change,
Whirls the whole firmament, till as you gaze,
All else unseen, it is as heaven itself
Had lost its poise, an each unanchored star
In phantom haste flees to the horizon line.
What dupes we are of the deceiving eye!
How many a light men wonderingly acclaim
Is but the phosphor of the path Life makes
With its own motion, while above, forgot,
Sweep on serene the old unenvied stars!
Robert Underwood Johnson, in Century.

UNCLE FLAXLEY'S HOBBY.

BY HELEN FORREST GRAVES.

The white, vertical light of a February day shone down through the skylight of Julian Dover's studio, its pitiless brightness bringing out every layer of dust on the Venetian red draperies, every spot and stain on the much benicked walls.

The lay figure was doubled up in a most impossible attitude against a big chair, covered with cotton velvet and cheap gilt fringe; a bunch of faded roses, in an old "crackle" vase, hung limply down, and Mr. Dover, in a shabby plum-colored velvet coat, and a Turkish fez perched jauntily on one side of his handsome head, was painting desperately away, intent on economizing every second of the precious winter daylight.

"Oh, the deuce!" he exclaimed, abruptly. "What made you jump so, Clarie? A man don't want the current of his ideas disturbed just when—"
The model lifted her large, wine-brown eyes to his face, with a deprecatory smile.

"I hear Kitty Flaxley outside," said she.
"Outside she must stay, then!" remarked Mr. Dover, frowning at his palette. "I can't be interrupted; every minute is a lump of gold. Wait!" he roared, as a gentle rapping sounded on the door. "Clarie is posing for me!"

And then she perceived a slight, graceful figure in a coarse lilac cotton gown, and a striped handkerchief carelessly twisted around her rich, brown locks, leaning in an artistic attitude against a window-sash studded with many small panes, that was supported between two standards.

Her fingers were intertwined in her hair; her elbows rested on the sill, where a coarse flower-pot or two were ranged. She was not Mrs. Julian Dover for the time being; she was "The Fisherman's Wife," destined by good luck and the grace of the hanging committee to figure in the forthcoming spring exhibition.

"Oh, Julian, I am so tired!" she pleaded. "Every bone in me is cramped. Mayn't I rest?"
"You've no idea of true art," said Julian, slowly. "You haven't posed half an hour yet."

"I'm so sorry; but—"
"Jump, then!" said the painter—for the first time realizing how pale and worn the delicate, oval face was. "I suppose I can be putting in the distant sea while you gossip with your Kitty."

He caught her hand as she skipped past him, and kissed her—a kiss which was a rich reward for all the cramp and weariness she had endured—and she ran out to the hall, tugging as she went to remove the knotted red silk neckerchief which supplied an element of warm color to the picture.

There stood her quondam schoolmate, Kitty Flaxley, with cheery lips and sparkling eyes.

"Oh, Claire, how odd you look!" said she.

"Yes," said Mrs. Dover, composedly. "I'm 'The Fisherman's Wife.' Every bone in me is a separate pain, with sitting so long watching for my husband's boat."

Both laughed; and then the artist's wife led Miss Flaxley into the studio, where Julian nodded a pleasant salutation to her.

"You won't expect me to stop working?" said he.

"Of course not!" said Kitty. "It's work that I've come to talk about. Such news as I've got! The family fortunes are all made. Our Uncle Flaxley came home yesterday. That is, he isn't our uncle—he's only a sort of cousin; but mamma naturally wants to make the relationship as near as possible; so we are all instructed to call him 'uncle!'"

"And who is Uncle Flaxley?"
"That's just it," said Kitty, laughing. "He went to the South Sea Islands, thirty years ago, and people took no notice at all of his exit except to say something about 'good riddance to bad rubbish.' He comes back, and you would think him a canonized saint. Nothing is good enough for him."

"Oh!" said Dover. "He's made money?"

"Exactly," nodded Kitty. "But he's the oddest old fish—a little, dried-up, parchment-faced man, who goes about finding fault with everything and everybody, and promulgating the most outlandish theories that ever were heard of. The first thing he did was to upset all our family traditions. You know, Claire, how mamma has brought us up—like the lilies of the field, that toil not, neither do they spin? Now, we are each of us to learn a trade. I'm going into dress-making!"

"Impossible!" cried the artist's wife.

"Theodora is going to tackle art embroidery. Constantine says she hasn't decided yet between telegraphy and

typewriting. Oh, you may well look amazed! It's all Uncle Flaxley. He says he'll give us a thousand dollars apiece when we've each learned a real, bread-winning, practical trade. He says it's what every woman ought to do. Dora wants to get a thousand dollars to get herself a stunning set of diamonds. Con would like to go to Canada with the Trelawneys next year, and I—don't tell anyone, please, Claire and Julian—but I shall give mine to Rembrandt Alison, so that he can go to Paris and study in the Louvre."

"Good!" cried Julian Dover. "Then it's really true that you are engaged? Kitty, Kitty, an artist's wife is a first-class martyr!"

"An artist's wife is the happiest creature in the world, Kitty?" counter asserted Claire, her soft eyes lighted up with love. "A thousand dollars! Oh, I wish I could make a thousand dollars!"

"I'm going down town every day to learn the Graftenburgh system," said Kitty. "I shall have to work three long, endless months before they give me a diploma; but I shall have something to work for, don't you see? And now good-by! I'm off for Graftenburgh's!"

Uncle Elimelech Flaxley walked around the house of his cousin's widow, with his hands hooked under his coat-tails, and his blue spectacles balanced on the bridge of his nose, peering into everything, criticising everything, and finding fault with everything.

Mrs. Peter Flaxley smiled at all his comments. In her eyes his conduct was perfect.

"What!" Uncle Flaxley had cried, "three girls, and not one of 'em taught to earn her living! That's no way to bring up a family, sister Annabel. Every woman should have a trade. Every woman should be able to support herself the same as if she were a man."

This was Uncle Flaxley's hobby. He trotted it out, he bridled it and saddled it and rode it perpetually, and the upshot of it was that the thousand dollar proposition was made and promptly accepted by his three nieces.

"It's dreadful!" sighed Mrs. Flaxley; "but of course it is our interest to consent your uncle's wishes in every respect."

"I've always thought I should like to learn dressmaking," said Kitty. One could clothe one's self at half the expense. And then a thousand dollars, all of one's own—think of it."

"I know ever so many nice girls who do type-writing," said Constantia, a tall, willowy girl, with yellow hair and pallid skin. "If one must have a trade, I believe there's nothing more genteel."

But Theodora, the beauty of the Flaxley family, turned up her nose.

"Such an absurd idea of Uncle Flaxley's!" said she. "I'm a tolerably decent embroiderer already, and if the woman's exchange accepts a piece of my work, I suppose the old crank will recognize it as a token of being an expert in that particular trade!"

And as she shut herself up with silks and satins and several dozen ounces of rainbow-colored flosses and crewels, to design a pattern which should take the world of tapestry by storm.

Kitty wrestled bravely with the technicalities of the Graftenburgh system. Constantina worked diligently at the clicking marvel of the nineteenth century. Theodora was the first to look back from the plow-handles.

"I hate it!" said she, pettishly. "I can't make anything out of it! Such wooden-looking things as my cat-tails and storks are! I mean to go and see Philomel Alison about it."

Young Rembrandt Alison's studio was far smaller and less picturesque than that of his compeer, Julian Dover.

He slept on a sofa under the window of nights, and his sister Philomel, who kept house for him on the most economical principles, occupied a three-cornered closet at the rear, which she called a bedroom, and which, besides the cot-bed, held exactly two handboxes, and a chair with a wash-bowl and pitcher on it.

She was a skilled embroiderer, and worked her finger-ends off, while her brother, rapt in visions of Titian and Buonarrotti, stood before his canvas.

"Children, you work too hard, both of you," said a little, old, yellow-complexioned man, who had once known their father on the Mexican frontier, and who came occasionally to the studio, and viewed them with not unkindly eyes.

"It's work or starve, sir," said Alison, with short laugh.

"What do you ask for this picture?" abruptly questioned Mr. Flaxley.

"Two hundred dollars—when it is finished."

"Tut, tut!" said the old man. "Too much! Two hundred dollars for a bit of canvas eighteen inches square?"

"It's not a mere bit of canvas," said Alison, coloring up; "it's my brains—my ideas—the visions I see nightly in my sleep."

"I'll give you fifty dollars for it," hazarded the yellow-complexioned man. "I couldn't possibly sell it for that."

"Humph! humph!" snorted Flaxley. "The next I know, Philly here will be wanting to sell her bit of brown-and-yellow needlework for two hundred dollars, too!"

Philomel looked gravely up from her work.

"No," she said. "I'm to receive fifty dollars for it. It is an order."
"What is the world coming to?" cried Mr. Flaxley. "People must be achieving

to spend their money. What is the thing, anyhow—ducks paddling in a pond?"

Philomel shook her head.
"Herens," said she, "in a marsh full of reeds and rushes. Those lines of yellow silk—see!—are where the sunshine strikes the water."

Flaxley peered dubiously at the mass of bright colors.
"One has to exercise considerable imagination," said he.

"I wonder," said Philomel to her brother, after the fussy little visitor was gone, "if I ought to have told him that I was doing this work for his niece in Radcliffe street?"

"Speech is silver, silence is golden," said Rembrandt Alison, mechanically. "It's always best not to talk. Do you think, Phil, I've got the red too deep in this peasant's jacket?"

Mr. Flaxley, making his way home, thought of the studio he had just left, with a softening of the heart.

"They are nice children," he pondered. "Their father was a nice man. He took me into his ranch and cured me that time I had the gully fever. I might have died if it hadn't been for him."

Time passed on; the three months expired. Constantia copied some letters for her uncle on a typewriter with such skill and rapidity that he wrote out his check for a thousand dollars on the spot.

Kitty showed him her diploma from Graftenburgh & Co., and proudly called his attention to a trimly-fitting dress that she wore.

A second time Uncle Flaxley inscribed his autograph on an oblong slip of pale-green paper, and then Theodora unrolled a banner of dark-olive satin, glistening with rich embroidery.

"It has just been sold at the woman's exchange," said she, "for a hundred and ten dollars. Here's the receipt."

Uncle Flaxley pricked up his feather-like ears; he stared very hard through his spectacles.

"Your work?" said he.
"My work!" repeated Theodora, with dignity.

"No, it isn't!" curtly contradicted Mr. Flaxley, whose forte was not conventional repose. "I've seen those ducks and marsh-grasses before! I saw them when Philomel Alison was working them. Young woman, you have deceived me?"
Theodora turned scarlet. The suddenness of his contradiction had stricken her guilty soul dumb.

"No thousand-dollar check for you," said Mr. Flaxley. "Go and say your prayers and read over the Ten Commandments, where it says, 'Thou shalt not steal!' For you are a thief!"

He had scarcely overcome his wrath against this backsliding relative when he trotted around to Rembrandt Alison's studio the next day.

"I can't get that young fellow's wistful face out of my mind," thought he. "I guess I'll buy the eighteenth-inch square of canvas after all."

He stood wiping his boots on the mat in the studio vestibule, and plainly heard Kitty's voice saying:

"Do take it, Rembrandt! I've earned it myself. It's mine to give, and I've no possible use for it. I thought of you all the time, and I do so want you to go to Paris and study in the Louvre!"

Uncle Flaxley pushed the door open with a bang and walked in, regardless of etiquette.

"Yes, take it, Alison," said he—"take it in the spirit that she gives it. She's a trump, that girl is!"

Rembrandt Alison looked at Kitty's scarlet face with grave, searching eyes.

"I will take it," said he, "if Kitty will give me herself, also. There can be no crushing sense of obligation where love bridges the way."

"I'll give her to you," said Uncle Flaxley, holding pushing Kitty forward. "Things are happening just to suit me."

"Me also," said Philomel, in a whisper, her pale face lighted up with joy.

"Here!" said Uncle Flaxley; "what's the price of this picture—and this—and this? I'll buy 'em all! Gracious me! if you're really going to Paris, there's no reason Kitty shouldn't go, too, on her wedding trip."

Of all Uncle Flaxley's eccentricities, this was the most delightful. Kitty had a long story to tell Julian Dover and Claire, in their studio across the hall, that day.

"It will be such a glorious thing," cried Claire, still enacting "The Fisherman's Wife," "for you to marry an artist!"

But Mrs. Flaxley declared that her rich relation had been "shamefully partial" in the matter of the thousand-dollar proposition. It is so hard to suit everybody!—Saturday Night.

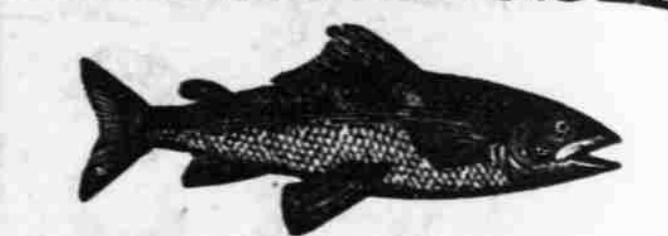
Wild Horses of Lob.
Two young Frenchmen, brothers, Grum-Grijmaillo by name, have just returned from the ancient kingdom of Lob, in Eastern Turkey. They bring with them thousands of specimens of birds, mammals, fishes and plants.

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The existence of wild camels was also corroborated, a herd having been pursued for a long way in the direction of Lob Nor, but unfortunately the travelers were unable to come up with them.—New York Press.

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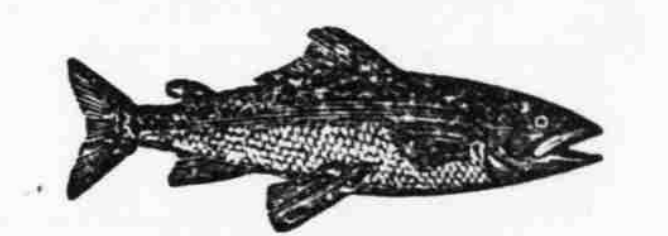
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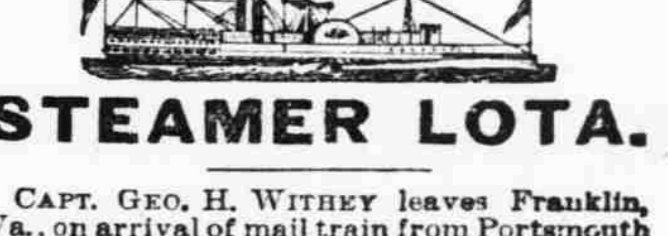


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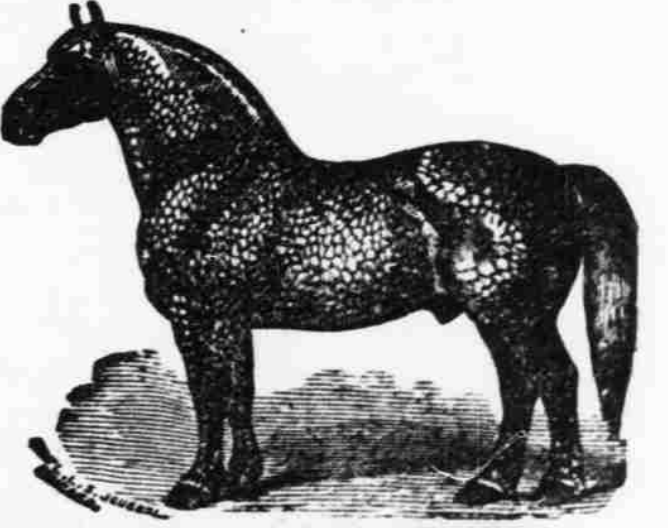


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