

THE HEADLIGHT

A. ROSCOWER, Editor & Proprietor.

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LIFE.

If life were one dance in a torch-lit hall,
If life were sweet music and that were all,
It would be as gay as a Summer day,
But music ceases and lights die out,
And what of the darkness of night without?
If life were but lover and lady gay,
No armor to wear and no riding away,
It would be as bright as a wedding night,
But morning bugles and Honor calls,
And, oh! the silence of widowed halls!
One rare brief moment they fight no more,
The sailor is home from the distant shore.
Away so long! and rest but a song,
Begun by a bride in the dead man's ears,
And lost in the tempest or shock of spears.
—Douglas Sladen, in Lippincott's.

A LITTLE COWARD.

BY ANNA SHELDON.

"Such a little coward!"
The words come floating up to me from a group of children playing under my window and carry me back two years, to the summer I spent in Westonville and the "little coward" I met there.

I had been in practice as a physician for several years, when Aunt Jane, the rich aunt of the Hutchinson family, wrote to invite me to spend a few weeks with her. I was rather amazed at the invitation, as Aunt Jane had never had the slightest affection for me; but the letter was cordial enough to tempt me.

"I have three young ladies visiting me," she wrote, "and you may fall in love with any of them, with my consent. They are all well-bred and well-bred, which is more than can be said of most girls nowadays. Serena Mayberry is just the woman for a physician's wife, self-possessed, calm, courageous and yet perfectly womanly. She is very handsome, too. Julia Strong is a literary girl and writes for the newspapers. She is pretty, but abstracted, lives in a poetic region above my reach. Susy Markham is scarcely more than a child, eighteen years old, an I small as a girl of twelve, fair-haired, blue-eyed, gentle and loving; but will not attract you, as she is the worst little coward I ever saw—screams at a spider, faints at a mouse, clings to the boat when on the water and gets as white as a ghost if a horse prances. But come and see me and the girls, and stop poisoning patients, saving bones and practicing about sick-rooms, for a month at least."

So I went. I had been at Aunt Jane's in my boyish days, and the large, beautiful house, with its wide, high-ceilinged rooms, its broad porches, and airy halls, was quite familiar to me. Lying near a river and in the shadow of a mountain, Westonville was the most charming summer residence, and Aunt Jane had visitors from the first warm day to the last one, so that I was not surprised to find others beside those mentioned in my letter of invitation.

Pleasant days were the rule, and we boated, rode, drove, clambered up the mountain for picnic parties, played lawn-tennis and croquet, and enjoyed life as youth only can enjoy it in summer days free from toil or care.

Aunt Jane gave me a most cordial welcome, and the first time she was alone with me, said:

"It is time you were married, Harry. I have thought it all over, and I mean to give you a house well furnished as soon as you introduce me to Mrs. Hutchinson. No! You needn't gush about it. I can afford it, and you deserve it! But don't imagine from my letter that the girls know of my match-making intentions. They would pack up and leave at five minutes' notice, if they suspected it. And they are all popular in society, making a sacrifice of other pleasant invitations to come to Westonville. Serena is the wife for you, if you can win her."

And I cordially admired Serena. Certainly she was the most queenly, self-sustained, beautiful girl I ever met. Nothing fluttered her, or moved her from a calm composure. It was impossible to imagine Serena in hysterics, and her health was absolutely perfect.

I devoted myself to Serena, and found her mind as attractive as her face. She was well-read, and had a keen interest in the current topics of the day. I never met any one who so thoroughly read and understood a newspaper, and she could converse well on all the political, foreign and domestic affairs.

Julia was in agonies of composition, gathering scenes and incidents for her first novel, and going about as if asleep with her eyes open.

And Susy. The first time I saw Susy she was in the orchard, dressed in something blue and thin, all ruffles and bows. She was standing under an apple-tree absolutely paralyzed with terror, and gazing at a huge caterpillar creeping up her arm. Hearing my step, she raised a colorless face, with stained blue eyes and quivering lips, to say:

"Oh, take it off! Oh, please take it off!"

Another minute found her sobbing hysterically, and with a choking word of thanks she ran away.

It all passed so quickly that she was

gone before I saw how pretty she was, leaving behind a half-picture of short golden curls and frightened baby blue eyes. The next time I saw those eyes they were full of tearful gratitude for my heroic handling of caterpillars.

It was odd how they haunted me. Quite resolved to win Serena, if persistent wooing would accomplish it, I sought her on all occasions, but, being a united party of friends, we were not often tete-a-tete. And it was to me, always, that Susy turned, in hours of peril, when a load sat upon her white dress, when the boat tipped a hair's breadth more than usual, when horrible crawling things crossed our paths, and cows lifted their heads to contemplate us. On all such occasions, two tiny hands, white as milk, soft as satin, suddenly clasped my arm, and "oh! oh!" called my attention to the terror.

And it was not done for effect. You cannot deceive a physician to that extent, and my professional eyes noted how the pretty face blanched, the pulse quickened and the whole little figure trembled. She really was the worst little coward I ever saw.

And yet, although I chided myself for it, I could not share Serena's openly expressed contempt, or sufficiently admire her own scornful indifference to toads and grasshoppers, boat tipping or fractious horses. She rode well, a magnificent figure on horseback, while Susy trembled and shivered, and clung to the gentle animal she rode with desperate energy.

It was late in the season and all of my Aunt Jane's guests had departed excepting Serena, Susy and myself, when one morning we were seated in the sitting-room, discussing an important matter. A far-away cousin of Aunt Jane's had been a collector of rare jewelry and plate, and had left his valuable treasures, the result of years of purchase and selection, to her.

"And the whole lot has been sent here," said Aunt Jane. "I am not a coward, but I have let it be well understood in Westonville that I never keep money in the house, have very little plate and few jewels. There is nothing discourages a burglar more than a certainty that there is nothing to steal."

"Does any one know?" I asked.

"The editor of the Westonville Gazette published the whole story on Saturday. He must have seen some of the servants who heard us talking over the lawyer's letter."

"I'll run up to the city and arrange to send the boxes to a safe-deposit company," I said.

"Do! Go now! You can come back on the 5:30," said Susy. "I shall not sleep a wink if they stay here. Oh! and her very lips were white, "if I saw a burglar, I believe I should die!"

And looking into her white, terrified face, I believe so too, although Serena said, loftily:

"What nonsense you do talk, Susy."

But, Aunt Jane consenting, I went upon my proposed errand, arranged to have the boxes sent for the following day, and was on my way to the depot when I met an old friend and patient. The ten minutes' chat that followed cost me the loss of the 5:30 train. Not another one stopped at Westonville, excepting the midnight express, until the next day.

Fretting, reproaching myself, I passed the time as I best could until midnight, my heart sinking at the thought of the three lonely ladies at Westonville. There was but one man on the place, and he slept in a room over the stable. What if any thief attempted to obtain the valuable boxes piled in the hall? Serena could be trusted to be cool and collected; Aunt Jane was not timid; but Susy—poor little Susy!—she would die, she said; and I feared she would. As the train sped on, this thought of Susy's terror became almost maddening; and when, at last, I was at the little wayside station, quarter of a mile from Aunt Jane's, I started on a run for the house.

The hall-door stood open, and I heard a sound in the sitting-room that seemed to chill the blood in my veins. Throwing open the door, I saw Susy—little Susy!—clinging to the throat of a man roughly dressed, who held Aunt Jane in a chair, while he tried to shake off Susy's arms, at the same time keeping Aunt Jane down. Serena lay in a dead faint on the floor.

"You shall not hurt her!" Susy cried, her slender arm strained to choke the sufferer. "Let go, you wretch! I'll kill you."

One blow on the top of his head from

my heavy walking-stick brought the fellow down insensible. Susy dropped her arms and stood white as death, but perfectly calm, facing me.

"Can you find me a rope to tie this fellow?" I asked.

She nodded, sped away, and returned with a coil of clothes-line.

"Listen!" she said, speaking quickly. "There is another one in the china closet, locked in. He is trying to kick the door down. Do you see, this is James!"

James was the one man-servant Aunt Jane employed. Tying him firmly, I gave my next attention to Aunt Jane, whose whole face was covered with blood from a wound in the head. Knowing how the sight of blood always sickened Susy, I tried to keep her back, but she said, quietly:

"Tell me, please, what you want and how to help you."

I sent her for water, rags, laudanum, and while we bound up Aunt Jane's head and restored her to consciousness, Serena came to her senses and sat up, white and shaking.

"Oh, Susy, that man will kick the closet door down!" she cried, as the blows from the next room became more violent.

It seemed as if he would, and I started to quiet him, when Susy grasped my arm.

"Don't open the door!" she said.

"There may be more than one man there. You see, we were all sitting up here, hoping you would come on the midnight train, but Aunt Jane had not told James to go to the station because she thought you had rather walk up than have us alone. So I suppose James thought you were gone for all night, and he came in at some time in the evening, and he does not know when, and hid in that china closet. I went to the dining-room in the dark for some water just as he crept out. I could just see him, and that another man was creeping after him, but not out of the closet. I slammed the door, locked it, and ran in here just as James struck dear Aunt Jane on the head and tried to push her down in her chair. Then I flew at him and you came in. But there may be more than one man in the closet. The door is strong, and I will run down to the police station while you take care of Aunt Jane and Serena."

Before I could stop her she was running across the hall, out at the door and down the road, while James suddenly revived and began to struggle and curse.

My hands were full, for Aunt Jane was severely hurt, and Serena was so terrified that she could not stir, sobbing and half fainting in sheer terror.

I cannot tell how long it was before Susy came speeding back with three strong policemen behind her, but in the meantime some of the maids were roused and had come to my assistance.

There proved to be but one burglar in the closet, a Westonville man and cousin of James's, and the two were marched off, securely bound. Aunt Jane was put to bed and made as comfortable as possible; Serena had gone to her own room; the house was locked up when I turned to bid Susy good night.

She was standing at the foot of Aunt Jane's bed, holding fast to a chair, her face perfectly colorless, and her limbs trembling. I mixed her a dose of composing medicine and put it to her lips.

"Don't mind me," she said, smiling faintly. "I always was a coward."

"Nobody shall ever call you so where I am," I said, and then—well, I will not add all I said, but then and there I won my darling's confession of love for me, and gave my life's allegiance to the woman I loved.

Aunt Jane was delighted. She understood perfectly the love that prompted the child to attempt to divert the attack of the ruffian James to herself, and it was a delight to her to make ready the pretty house for us. Serena comes often to visit us, calm and self-poised as ever, and quite as contemptuous when Mrs. Hutchinson flies to my arms in an agony of terror if a mouse runs across the floor, or a spider crawls up the wall.

For, although she has proved herself a heroine, Susy is still, in such matters as mice and spiders, a little coward.—*The Ledger.*

There has lately been organized in England a rent guarantee company, the business of which is to insure landlords against loss by bad tenants. In order to reduce its risk to a minimum it makes a business of keeping landlords informed as to the standing of tenants, and for a consideration they are supplied with information which often enables them to keep undesirable tenants out of their houses.

FARM AND HOUSEHOLD.

INDIRECT FERTILIZERS.

There are substances that in themselves do not furnish the plant any needed ingredient for growth, but when applied to the soil assist materially in augmenting the crop. One of the best illustrations of this class of fertilizers is common salt. Lime is another substance rarely lacking in the soil, but when added assists in setting free other substances that are much needed by the growing plants, that otherwise would not have been available for the crop. Water is added in irrigation not as a fertilizer but because it is the great solvent in nature and the vehicle of transfer of the various substances that go to build up a plant when entering it from the soil water.—*American Agriculturist.*

DISEASES FROM PIGEONS.

The pigeon, as is well known, will feed at all the poultry yards in a neighborhood, and is no respecter of owners. A flock of pigeons will soon learn to know the feeding hours, and will alight in yards when not desired. They are liable to carry disease from one yard to another, even on their feet, and, as they are subject to many of the diseases that affect fowls, and particularly roup, they are a nuisance in any community. They will also introduce lice from a distance. If one wishes to keep pigeons he should do so by keeping them confined in wire yards, covered, and not at the expense of his neighbor's feed, with the risk of causing disease in all the flocks. There should be some protection for those who do not wish pigeons in their yards.—*Farm and Fireside.*

GROUND BONE AS A FERTILIZER.

In a report on experiments made at the New Jersey Station with ground bones as a fertilizer, it is pointed out that ground bone is both a phosphate and a nitrogenous manure, insoluble in water, but when in the soil is decomposed and yields its constituents to the feeding plant in proportion to the fitness. It varies but little in composition and is less liable to adulteration than most fertilizers. They, in fact, are usually pure. Ground bones have a tendency to cake, and to avoid this the manufacturer may use other substances which, while aiding mechanically, reduce the chemical value of the mixture. Raw bone is most usually pure, but the fat it contains renders it less easily decomposed. Bones having served the purpose of the glue maker are low in nitrogen and very high in phosphoric acid. The method now employed of steaming the bones under pressure improves their quality without altering the amount of the plant food ingredients. As the value of ground bones depends upon composition and their fitness, a mechanical as well as chemical analysis is required to determine their value. The farmer must determine by crop tests which grade he should buy—whether, for example, pay a dollar for ten pounds of phosphoric acid in one condition, or for eighteen and a half pounds in another form. Average wood ashes are worth \$9 per ton, but the best vary considerably.—*Fruit Growers' Journal.*

FARM AND GARDEN NOTES.

It is not a good plan to allow the hens to lay in their roosting place.

The diminutive bantam lays more eggs by weight than any other fowl.

By all means avoid exposure of the milk to hot sun and to foul air.

Store up a supply of dry, clean straw for making nests during the winter.

If pullets are depended upon to lay the

eggs for spring hatching keep a two-year-old cock to mate with them.

Old barrels or hogheads are convenient for storing the poultry droppings.

Geese eat the grass close down to the roots and often kill it out in this way.

Keep the new growth of raspberries and blackberries cut back to three feet.

A paste made of lime and turpentine is excellent to apply to wounds on trees.

Unless fattening for early market two feeds a day is all that is necessary now if the fowls are allowed to run out.

Test each cow separately and reject all not suited to your line of dairying or that fail in quantity or quality of milk.

After the surplus fowls are marketed in the fall is a good time to begin keeping accounts with the poultry for the next year.

This is a good month for getting rid of the surplus marketable fowls; later on the markets are liable to be more crowded.

Feed liberally, have pure water always accessible, and keep a mixture of equal parts of salts, ashes and sulphur within reach of the cows.

The growth of late hatched poultry should be pushed along as rapidly as possible; after cold weather sets in it is more difficult to secure a good growth.

Condiments are not health-producers, and should be used very sparingly. Sound grain, pure water and comfortable quarters are much better even for eggs.

Pure water should be given freely to fattening hogs. Milk, which is sometimes given in place of water, is too solid and does not relieve the thirst as water does, and dishwater and swill from the horse are often salty. Give fresh, pure water.

Get a boy to like farm life and its surroundings, and you have him, in general, anchored to the farm. But if, through inattention, neglect, unkindness, or downright meanness, you make him hate it, good-bye to your hopes of keeping him at home. This is one great reason why so many farm-boys seek city life.

Have a lock of nice hay or a lick of meal in the manger each night and morning for the cows, and there will be no need of sending a dog or tired and cross hired hand after them. They will be on hand at milking time, ready to hurry to their places, and they will express their satisfaction by increasing the contents of the pail.

RECIPES.

Okra—Wash tender pods of okra and cut in thin slices. Peel two tomatoes for every quart of okra, and slice. Put together in a sauce-pan, add salt and simmer for half an hour. Season with a tablespoonful of butter and a little salt and pepper.

Boiled Mutton—Wipe dry with a damp towel, dust a cloth thickly with flour and wrap the leg in it. Put into the kettle, cover with water and boil fifteen minutes to every pound; add a teaspoonful of salt. When done, take up, garnish with parsley and serve with caper sauce.

Baked Tomatoes—Select smooth, round tomatoes of uniform size, not very juicy. Put them in hot water, remove the skins, cut them in halves and scoop out all the seeds. Chop and rub to a powder one-third of a cup of boiled ham or tongue. And two-thirds of a cup of soft bread crumbs, one teaspoon of chopped parsley or one saltspoon of thyme, a little pepper, and sufficient melted butter to moisten. Fill the tomatoes with the mixture, place them in a shallow dish and bake fifteen minutes.

Creamed Walnuts—The white of one egg and an equal amount of cold water, one teaspoon of lemon or vanilla. Beat until thoroughly mixed, then beat in confectioner's sugar, sifted, until the dough is stiff enough to mold. Break off pieces the size of a nutmeg, roll them till smooth and round. Press the halved walnut meats on each side, letting the cream show slightly between the meats. One egg will require about a pound and a quarter of sugar.

Gooseberry Pie—Pick of the stems and blossoms of your gooseberries, wash them and pour enough boiling water over them to cover them. Let them stand a few minutes and then drain them. Line your pie plates with paste, fill them with the fruit and add three-quarters of a pound of sugar to a pint of fruit. Drudge a little flour over the top and cover with a lid of paste; leave an opening in the centre to permit the steam to escape and bake them.



A cream of tartar baking powder. Highest of all in leavening strength.—*Latest U. S. Government Food Report.*