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A STORY OF A CLOCK.

I AM an old grandfather's clock. In these days, when there's a cry for "all things new," anything that is not "up to date," however interesting and valuable it may be, is apt to be relegated to the shelf.

In my long life I must say, truly, I have always been treated with the utmost deference and affection, for, you see, people of good family and high education generally are very much attracted to handsome and useful bits of furniture, and seldom discard them for a fashionable "fad." Anyway, I hear that we are quite in demand now, though in bygone days there were few houses that could not boast of one of us, and, to my thinking—but that's neither here nor there.

I am two hundred years old, and not ashamed to say so. A good deal of ticking I've done in that time, and a good deal of life I've seen. Ah, me! the changes that take place with the flight of ages. The old faces vanish and are replaced by the younger ones, who in their turn have their day, and then make way for others. Yet, looking back, it does not seem so very long ago that ladies wore powdered hair and patches, and inflated their gowns with huge hoops, and went a-visiting in sedan chairs. Queer times those, when a man was hanged for stealing a sheep and duels were every-day occurrences. 'Twas always love affairs they fought over. Ladies, I have heard, dye their hair now, instead of powdering it, and wear gowns in which "the clinging effect" is carried to such an extreme that I marvel how they get in and out of them. Of course it's a graceful style, if only people would not carry what they call "style" to such a ridiculous length. Thank goodness, though, there are numbers of sensible folk who like to look natural, in spite of the mandates of fashionable modistes.

I haven't done much traveling. You see almost all my life has been spent with Scotch people, where the "auld house" passes from generation to generation, with all its belongings. Many a tale I could tell, oftentimes humorous and oftentimes sad, for is not life made up of contrasts? I often think what strange pranks human emotion, love, hate, fear, sympathy, make human beings play!

At the time I am writing of my home was with three old sisters; high-bred, aristocratic ladies, with straight backs (guiltless of ever having yielded to the seductions of a rocking-chair) and aquiline noses—the "family nose," they proudly called it. A trifle stern—reserved also—but they had dear, warm hearts beneath that coldness. Why, I've seen Miss Cecilia's faded gray eyes grow wonderfully soft and tender at the sight of the first rose of summer, for they fairly worshiped every plant and tree and shrub in that wonderful old garden of theirs.

I could see it from where I stood in the lobby, and away beyond to the red brick wall, where hung the most delicious fruit, sun-kissed into perfection of taste and color—golden apricots, pears, peaches, plums—amongst the trellised leaves. If I even began to tell you about the sweet, old-fashioned flowers that grew in such profusion I'd never be able to stop. Most of them took prizes year in, year out, at the show, which old Sandy was "awful proud of." And you should have seen the "allies" of roses, and the arbor thickly covered with them, where the "General" used to smoke his pipe, and—but I must get on.

One day, when the roses were blooming grandly, an unwonted excitement got up in the house. I found out that a young nephew and his bride were expected from across the ocean. Goodness me, if there wasn't a fuss! I was rubbed and rubbed, till I shone like a looking-glass. The old ladies wouldn't allow "furniture polish" to be used for me—and I think it would have been quite degrading.

I remembered Mr. Archie—a fine, stalwart young fellow. He had married an American heiress. The fortune she would inherit had been made in "trade." Now, this was a great blow to the pride of the Ker family—besides, they had had other hopes concerning their nephew. So when the couple arrived I could see they had hard work to conceal their rather unjust prejudices. She was a tiny creature,

with large, dark eyes and a plump little figure. I confess I fell in love with her at the very first, and she seemed equally taken with me, for she cried out when passing me, "Why! what a very quaint love of a clock! I dote on these delightfully antique things, with an old family air about them."

She had an attractive manner, and looked kind of shy-like, I thought. You see, she was but young, poor thing, and had spent most of her life at an English boarding-school, I heard. Then, of course, meeting new relatives must be a little bit trying, even for an American heiress. It seemed so for her, anyway.

Mr. Archie was gay and "canty" as ever. He smiled at me and said, "Well, old fellow, glad to see you in such good health!" Just at that moment I struck four o'clock, which meant from me, "The same to you!"

When "Petite" (as we all called the young wife) chose she could be most fascinating, but I noticed she seemed rather ill at ease with her new relatives. You see, her ways were so different from theirs. Her voice wanted softness, and her expressions were often rather odd. I fancied they grated on the refined manners of the old people. I used to love to listen to the negro melodies which she sometimes sang in the evenings, to the accompaniment of the banjo. Her voice was clear and sympathetic, but often had a sad ring to it, I thought. Perhaps she was a wee bit homesick, for all she had a most devoted husband. Amongst her songs my favorite was "Swanee River"—it touched me wonderfully—and then, there was the "Canadian Boat Song." She would sing that with Mr. Archie. I did enjoy that one!

It was such a pity, I often thought as the days went by, that the young creature seemed so far away from the old ladies' hearts as ever. The trouble was, they had made up their minds that their nephew was to marry the fair, tall and stately daughter of a neighboring baronet, who possessed irreproachable manners and "a family nose." Report said she had been "fair duff" about our young master, but report often makes mistakes—but I must not digress, or you'll be dubbing me a tiresome old chatterbox.

About two months later we decided to give a dinner party—and to give it in style, too. Just the day before it was to come off an untimely accident befell the coachman, who was to assist in waiting at table. He sprained his ankle. Mrs. Archibald "fished up," as she expressed it, a seemingly very smart young man to take his place. So everything went off swimmingly. What a display of fine things! The old family plate was all on show, and made a brave one.

'Twas a bright, happy gathering; many young, fresh faces, too, amongst it. That pleased me; you see, when one gets old it seems natural like to feel that way. Mr. Archie told such amusing anecdotes of his life in the colonies, and also some terrifying ones, principally relating to his trip to a place called—something ending with "dike," where gold was plentiful. I fairly shivered when I heard them—such hair-breadth escapes! And there he was, sitting amongst us, alive and well, and as jolly—"Come now, old grandfather, get on; no hawing!" But I must say, Mr. Archie had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

A couple of days later I overheard Mr. and Mrs. Archibald talking, as they were coming down the stairs, and in arm—for they were always "that loving." She seemed a wee bit put out, for there were tears in her dark eyes, and she looked different altogether, for she was wearing a black gown instead of the usual white one—a relative had died, I suppose.

It was the twelfth of August, and her husband was going away for a week's grouse-shooting, which begins in Scotland on that day.

I am soft-hearted. Those tears went straight to my heart. They are the solace of the old, but the young should not grieve.

"It's my nose, Archie," she was saying, half laughing, half crying. "I think I could make them love me if only I had a 'family nose' and could look stately."

You should have heard Mr. Archie laugh, and he assured her she had the dearest little nose in the world. It was the feature of her face he'd first

fallen in love with, and then he quoted some poetry about "the petal of a flower"—"tip-tilted, like the petal of a flower," that was it.

They stopped beside me. "They'll love you, never fear, some day, sweetheart!" says he. "Won't they, old fellow?" And I struck two o'clock, which signified, "They will!" I didn't think then that I—but I'll tell you all about it.

So we were left alone—and some fine grouse from the moors made their appearance. Of course you know these birds are always kept till they are quite old, so Susan took them down to the cellar. I'm far away from heather and sportsmen now, but ah me! a tiny sprig of it affects me as nothing else can, except, maybe, the bagpipes. I dare say I'm very sentimental—but, dear me! what would life be without sentiment, which is, after all, just love and proper feeling, without which, I'm thinking, the pulse of this big, bustling world would cease to beat.

Now what happened after this is one of the stirring incidents of my life. My body is long, but so is my head, and I'll always feel sure that 'twas the new man who had taken our old coachman's place for these few days who was the culprit. He was very far removed from being a professional at his work, but he meant business for all that, and Mr. Archie's absence from home was a step in the right direction.

About two o'clock on the morning of the eighteenth of August, when all was quiet and asleep in the old house, I heard a queer kind of fuzzling in the dining-room. Then light footsteps seemed to come to and fro into the hall. Everything was dark as pitch. Even the harvest moon was tired of shinning, and not a ray from her fell (as usual) on the tiled floor of the lobby just then. Hark! What—who is that creeping noiselessly down the thickly carpeted stairs? My old eyes could not see—and yet, is that not a white figure, for all the world like a big snowflake, drifting down, down. Ah! a streak of moonlight falls athwart it and shows clear and distinct the figure of Mr. Archibald's little wife.

She stooped as if to pick up or grope for something, and I heard her say, "I may have dropped it in the garden."

Then she gave a kind of stumble, and a sort of stifled cry. Then—oh, my! I saw her lift our solid silver, richly chased coffee-pot from the lowest step, just behind the knight in armor, who had stood sentinel there, grim and stern, for long, long years. The moon, always capricious, hid her face again behind a cloud, but I could see that big snowflake standing stock still, as if it had been frozen into a beautiful statue.

She stooped towards the dining-room as if listening, and then she crossed swiftly over to me. I was only a couple of yards away luckily. She pulled open my glass door and one after another she pushed inside of me the collection of silver plate that the "gentleman" at work now in the pantry had placed there, carefully avoiding "clinking" them against my brass weights—spoons, forks, teapot, salver—everything higgledy-piggledy.

Just think of the courage of that pretty young creature who had grasped the situation so quickly—and risen to the occasion—and it all seemed to be done in a twinkling. For all she knew, a gang of desperadoes might have sprung out and crushed the life out of her before she'd time to give one "skiff" for help. But the best of the play was to come.

I was fearfully excited; so much so that my heart beats were louder than usual, and how I ached with sympathy when her little mites of hands could scarcely lock the door of my case, they were trembling so! But she did it, and slipped the key within the bodice of her dressing-gown.

Just a few moments after we could hear the thief's footsteps returning. He evidently was going to make his exit by a small window just behind the staircase, and probably planned throwing the booty out and then making away with it. But if ever a man had mistaken his vocation, he had, for he hadn't the pluck of a mouse in him.

On hearing him returning, she crept behind me. All her courage must have left her, for she sank down, and I could hear her poor teeth chattering. My size and the darkness pretty effectually hid her small figure. Anyway, the whilom burglar (I could not catch a glimpse of his face, for his back was to me all the time) made direct for that precious coffee-pot and all the other bits of silver that were so dear to my old mistresses. He had a

black blazer bag with him, I noticed, and probably there was a confederate waiting outside. When he found they had been spirited away he expected next, I reckon, cold steel against his forehead, or he fancied some supernatural agency had been at work. If he only could have seen the frightened, helpless thing, all that was in his way—but, thanks to me, he couldn't. I stood solemnly, tick, tick, ticking, calm and brave and strong. I verily believe if that coward had seen and laid a finger on the little heroine of the play I would have cried out loud.

But he didn't—he just gave a smothered cry, a wild glance from right to left, and then he made for and was through that small window in a jiffy. I've often since wondered how he managed, for he was a phenomenally tall man. He did, anyway, and left everything behind; even the black bag was dropped in his flight.

Our poor little lady had to keep to her bed with a kind of nervous attack after her first, and I hope, last adventure of the kind. And I had quite a siege of indigestion and was all out of order for some time after, my heart beating like a steam engine, and several times I struck twenty-four without stopping.

You may imagine the gratitude of our family and the praise we both did get. But what pleased me more than anything was that, then and there, Mr. Archie's wife, "the thorn in the flesh" lately, and quite unfairly, I thought, was forever after loved—ay, doted upon, by those high-bred dames. "For her own sweet sake," they said, but 'twas the lucky termination to that thrilling episode in which I played such an important part, that softened their hearts, say I; and I think the game was worth the candle. Good-by. —Waverley Magazine.

Street Railway Statistics.

The preliminary report of the street railway industry of the country just issued by the Census Bureau is authority for the following interesting figures:

There are 817 operating companies and 170 leased lines.

The total number of miles of single track is 22,577.

Compared with figures for 1890, this represents an increase of 178 per cent.

The average number of employees is 133,640.

The annual pay roll averages \$80,770,000.

The number of passengers carried per year by all the roads is 5,872,000,000.

The average length of track operated per company is only twenty-seven and one-half miles.

The average number of rides per inhabitant throughout the whole country is sixty-three.

In 1890 the average number of rides per inhabitant was only thirty-two, the great increase taking place in the extension of roads to the South Atlantic States.

Three hundred and ninety-four companies operate less than ten miles of track each.

Two hundred and nineteen companies operate between ten and twenty miles each.

One hundred and seventy-nine companies operate between twenty and 100 miles each.

There are only twenty-five roads operating more than 100 miles of track.—Philadelphia Record.

Famous Horses.

It is strange that no one seems to know anything about the various horses that George Washington rode, and that the names of them all seem to have gone down into oblivion. Every one knows about Marengo, the white stallion Napoleon rode at Waterloo, and whose remains are now in the United States Museum at London. The Duke of Wellington was astride of Copenhagen during the battle and the horse lived to be twenty-seven. Richard III. owned White Surrey, and it was for him that he wanted to trade a kingdom. William III.'s favorite horse was named Sorrel and was blind in one eye, as was Savoy, the favorite horse of Charles VIII. of France.—Springfield Republican.

Killed in a Curious Manner.

While chopping wood near Augsburg, Germany, a boy named Wilhelm Behr caught his ax against a wire clothesline. At the same moment a flash of lightning struck the line, passed down the hatchet and killed him.

Germany's Oldest Warship.

Germany's oldest sea-going warship, the Krou, was built in England in 1867.

IDEALIZATION.

If pictures told the truth,
How fine the world would be!
How smooth the mountain way would seem!
How kind the billowing sea!
The humblest cot by ruin touched
Would be the best, in sooth.
The road were easy to content
If pictures told the truth.

The rural shepherdess would be
As beautiful as the queen,
And simple toil and strength would stand
In majesty serene.
And though the years might pass, each face
Would hold the lines of youth
And life would be just what it should
If pictures told the truth.



"You have heard my daughter sing. What would you advise us to do?" "Send her abroad at once!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Jack told me I was not like other girls." "That's what he tells all of us. He's read somewhere that all women are different."—Louisville Times.

Mary had a little lamb
And that wound up the score;
She boarded in a boarding house
And dared not ask for more.
—Brooklyn Life.

Tourist—"Did you—er—ever shoot a man?" Bronco Bill—"No, lady, I've plugged a few Indians, greasers an' dudes, but I never killed a human!"—Puck.

The call had become tedious. "I really must go," he said. "Oh, you men are such deceivers," she returned coyly. "I wish we girls could believe all you say."—Chicago Post.

Sharpe—"Why, yes, I was at church last Sunday." Kloseman—"Were you, really? Strange I didn't see you." Sharpe—"O! not at all. I took up the collection."—Philadelphia Press.

Here's a mighty little question,
But it causes lots of worry;
Why do shoestrings never break ex-
cept when one is in a hurry?
—Baltimore American.

"What's the matter with Primly?" "Why, he went home with a new hat the other day, and it didn't fit very well, and so his wife cut his hair away wherever it stuck."—Sioux City Tribune.

Mifkins—"That scoundrel Johnson called me an idiot!" Bifkins—"He didn't prove it, did he?" Mifkins—"No; but—" Bifkins—"Then I'd advise you let the matter drop, or he might."—Chicago News.

"Do your neighbors sing the latest songs of the day?" asked the landlord. "I shouldn't object to that," answered the sad-eyed tenant, "their specialty is the latest songs of the night."—Washington Star.

"Sir," cried Mr. Pecksniff, indignantly, "how dare you accuse me of such things? My reputation, sir, is spotless." "Your reputation may be, sir," replied the detective, "but you're not. We spotted you some time ago."—Philadelphia Press.

"Don't you think it would be a great scheme to get out on the stump and make a few speeches?" "Not a bit of it," answered Senator Sorghum. "As long as a man is willing to let his money do the talking, nobody is going to make fun of his grammar."—Washington Star.

"But you cannot fence," said the German university student, who had his face pretty well plastered up. "No," admitted the American college youth. "But I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will go up against one of our football games I'll make a try of one of your Heidelberg duels."—Chicago Post.

Power of Gentleness.

No bad man is ever brought to repentance by angry words, by bitter, scornful reproaches. He fortifies himself against reproof and huris back foul charges in the face of his accuser. Yet, guilty and hardened as he seems, he has a heart, and may be melted to tears by a gentle voice. Who, therefore, can restrain his disposition to blame and find fault, and can bring himself down to a fallen brother will soon find a way to better feelings within. Pity and patience are the two keys which unlock the human heart. They who have been most successful laborers among the poor and vicious have been the most forbearing.—New York Weekly.

The swindler believes that if a man is worth doing at all he is worth doing well.