

The Roanoke Beacon.

\$1.00 a Year, in Advance.

"FOR GOD, FOR COUNTRY, AND FOR TRUTH."

Single Copy, 5 Cents.

VOL. XV.

PLYMOUTH, N. C., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1904.

NO. 29.

THE SONGS OF LONG AGO.

I.
I'm weary of the songs of strife,
The chant of woe, the dirge of death;
Come, let's go back to love and life,
The sweetness of the rose's breath!
Let him whose greed enslaves him bear
His heavy troubles as he may
And, shrinking from assassins, fare
Along his own mistaken way.
But some one waits a song to me
From where the sweet, soft breezes blow
Of happy toilers in the tree
Who sing sweet songs of long ago.

II.
I'm weary of the hate and spite,
The jealous carping and the threats;
Come, let us look across the height
To where the sun in splendor sets,
Remembering that it will rise
Again to-morrow to display
New glories unto hopeful eyes,
To light the faithful on their way!
Let's cease a while the songs of war,
The dirge of death, the chant of woe,
And thank the Lord's glad songsters for
Their happy songs of long ago.
—S. E. Kiser.

Miss Ashbell

CONSTERNATION was depicted on the faces of the family group assembled to hear it, when I finished reading the letter I had just received from aunt.

The group consisted of myself—Mary, eldest daughter of the house and hearth—brown, dark-eyed, tall and eighteen; Helen, not quite as brown, hazel-eyed, almost as tall, and sixteen; Will, browner, dark-eyed, a head shorter, and ten; and Carrol towering above us all, blue-eyed, fair-haired, gold-mustached and twenty-one.

Aunt was, in fact, our great aunt, sister of our father's mother, but the only aunt, great or little, that we had ever known. We had met her but two or three times during our lives, as she lived in far-away Illinois, and was too much occupied with grains and heads to think of frequent visiting, and we—well, we were too poorly provided with gold and silver to take long and expensive journeys. So what little visiting there had been, had been on aunt's side, with one exception, and then I was the visitor.

We children had always heard twice a year from aunt—once collectively at Christmas, and once respectively on our birthdays—and each time the kindly note which exhorted us to "be good, industrious and self-reliant," enclosed a check, larger or smaller, according to aunt's gains on the preceding year. These notes we had been taught to answer with many wishes for the old lady's welfare and thanks for her kindness and hopes for a speedy meeting; in short, in a manner befitting the only nieces and nephews of the Carmody family when replying to the friendly epistles of their only aunt, to say nothing of that aunt being the wealthiest and most influential member of that family.

A few days before our father died he called us together, and said:

"My children, it isn't at all likely to occur, but if your aunt should ask a favor of you, grant it, no matter at what inconvenience. She has been my best and dearest friend."

Poor father! I suspect aunt had often helped him out of pecuniary difficulties. He was an unpractical, dreamy sort of man, fond of birds and poetry and flowers, and didn't succeed very well in life. But, in spite of his dreaminess and his want of worldly tact, and his being so totally unlike her in most ways, he was a great favorite of aunt's, and when we telegraphed his serious illness to her she left her vast possessions without a captain at a moment's notice, and hastened to his side, making her appearance in a bonnet that immediately suggested the prairies, it was so unlimited as to size and so bare of ornament, and which grotesquely obtruded itself into the remembrance of that sad time forever after.

Since father's death things hadn't been very bright with us. In fact, they hadn't been bright at all.

We found there was a good deal of money owing, and what remained of the two hundred dollars aunt gave us on the day of the funeral—she bade us "good-by" the instant the ceremonies were over—after our cheap mourning was paid for, went to the butcher, grocer and shoemaker.

We were willing to do, and did, whatever we could supporting the household; but, dear! dear! talk about weeds; I never saw anything grow like bills.

Carrol, who had an aristocratic turn of mind, struggled with it; and I, who

had a dressmaking turn of mind, struggled with that; and Helen struggled with her books, hoping to become a teacher in time; and little Will struggled with somebody else's books, for he went into a publishing house as errand boy—poor fellow!

Besides the struggles, we had mother on our minds. A few weeks after we lost our father, we lost our baby sister. A beautiful child she was, as bright as a diamond and as fair as a pearl, and the pride and darling of us all. Already sinking beneath the blow of her husband's death, when her little daughter died, too, my mother's heart was nearly broken. From being a sunny, energetic woman, she became listless and apathetic, sitting in her room day after day gazing upon the pictures of the loved ones, or rocking back and forth, her hands clasped before her, looking with her eyes upon vacancy.

"Oh, that she could be made to weep! That she could be roused from this dreadful speechless gloom into which she had fallen!" was our continual prayer, for the terrible thought came to us often that we should lose our mother in a much worse way than we had our father and sister—that her brain would at last give way beneath its weight of heavy despairing thoughts.

Well, the exchequer was low enough, and mother had had one of her very bad spells, and a lady customer had just been in and abused me—yes, abused; I can see no other word; women do fly in such tempers at their dressmakers—about the fit of her dress, declaring it to me "utterly ruined," when it only wanted taking up a little on one shoulder and letting down an inch or so in front; and Will's right arm was almost disabled from a heavy load of books he carried a long distance the day before (how men can have the heart to give a man's burden to a child I can't see), when aunt's letter fell like a bomb-shell into our nearly disheartened little camp:

"Dear Folks: A friend of mine—an Englishman" (aunt's language was correct enough, but at times her spelling was somewhat peculiar) "who came here purposing to start in business, took the fever, lingered a few months and died, leaving, Heaven knows why, his only child, a daughter who will eventually be a not-to-be-sniffed-at heiress, to my care. Having been delicately reared in the midst of devotion and tenderness, this place, only suited to bold, strong natures, is a little too ruff for her. So she desires—at least I desire for her—her home to be with you.

"My niece, Mary, who inherits the disposition of her father to a great degree—and he would have gone out of his way any day to give even a dumb brute pleasure—will, I am sure, be kind to her. Carrol will love her for her beauty, if for nothing else, and she is most lovable. Her maid will accompany her.

"At present her affairs are in a tangle, but I hope to unravel them in the course of a few months, and then you will be recompensed for whatever extra expense she may cause you. I would enclose a check at present writing, but all my funds are invested in a speculation from which I expect to reap much profit. Do the best you can until you hear from me again, when I will further unfold my plans in regard to Miss Ashbell, who, by the by, starts to-morrow.

AUNT."

No wonder consternation and dis-

may were depicted on every countenance when I ceased reading this letter. No wonder we looked gaspingly at each other. What in the world were we to do with this fine young lady in our humble home?

What could aunt be thinking about? True, she didn't know exactly how poor we were, for we'd been too proud to acknowledge our extreme poverty in our few and far-between letters. On the contrary, I am afraid we had led her to believe that we were in quite a flourishing condition. But for all that, she ought to have known that we were not flourishing enough to support a delicate and beautiful girl, used to luxury, tenderness and devotion, for even a few months. Was ever anything so malapropos and vexatious? Of course Miss Ashbell would look with scorn on our seven-roomed dwelling, with a back garden twenty-five by twenty-five, and a court-yard ten by ten. And suppose—as aunt, with a short-sightedness very unusual to her, complacently remarked—Carrol should fall in love with her? The proud English girl would no doubt regard him as a fortune-hunter, and indignantly compare his frank, impulsive, rather brusque manners with the repose and "awful" dignity of the languid swells of her own native land.

And somebody else might be attracted toward her—men are so susceptible of woman's beauty—somebody who now thought my face the sweetest in the world! The very thought made my heart stop beating.

And the maid? Even if we could make arrangements to accommodate her—and it seemed utterly impossible for us to do so—Betty, our faithful servant for the last fifteen years, would look upon her as an interloper, and treat her as such. Betty has been used to being "monarch of all she surveyed." Even in house-cleaning times—those that try men's souls and women's soles—she scorned the idea of an assistant.

"No, ma'am, I'll have no stranger pokin' round me. When I'm not able to do the work of this house alone I'll go."

And mother—dear, shrinking, grief-stricken mother—how would she bear the advent of this dainty Miss Ashbell? But we could do nothing to avert the impending misfortune. Even if we had thought of disobeying our father's last command, and refusing aunt the favor she had not asked, but, in her usual decisive way, taken for granted, the young lady was on her way, and would be here in a day or two.

And then we began to prepare for Miss Ashbell. Will's room was to be given up to her, and Will (Carrol's room was scarcely large enough for himself and his art-traps, as he called them) was stowed away in the loft—a proceeding which he viewed with immense dissatisfaction.

"I'll smother up there in hot weather," he said, with a weary face. "Oh, I wish there wasn't any Miss Ashbell! Why don't she go to a hotel?"

"Why don't she?" echoed I.

I said we began to prepare for her, but for lack of the afore-mentioned silver and gold, our preparations were of the simplest kind. Carrol made and put up two pretty brackets, and hung with a sigh—for he hated to part with them—the few pictures he possessed on the walls. I looped back the white curtains (freshly washed and ironed, with much grumbling, by Betty) with new blue ribbons, and I covered the trunk ottoman with bright chints, and with Helen's help made a new mat to place before the bureau, and we turned an old tablecloth into napkins, and bought a new napkin ring and two or three cut-glass goblets, and a lovely china cup and saucer, and when all was done, waited with anxious hearts for our unwelcome visitor.

Mother had shut herself up in her room early in the morning of the day we expected her, and had remained there; and the rest of us were all as uncomfortable as poor, proud, shy, sensitive people could be at the thought of a perfect stranger's ingress into the very heart of their home, and wishing audibly and inaudibly that Miss Ashbell's father had never brought her from England, when, as the sun sank in the west, and a cool, summer breeze, fragrant with the breath of the roses, lifted the curtains of our cosy bay-window, a carriage stopped at the door.

"She's come, and I'm gone," said Will, flinging down his book and then rushing out into the garden.

Carrol rose from his chair, ran his fingers through his golden hair, and glanced in the mirror at his new blue silk necktie. Helen sank on the lounge

with a sort of groan; and I opened the parlor door as Betty went muttering through the entry in answer to the bell.

"Is it Mrs. Carmody's?" asked a pleasant voice, with—yes, it was a slight brogue.

"Yes," answered Betty, shortly. And in another moment a round-cheeked, unmistakably red-haired, good-natured looking young girl in a plain traveling dress stood before me.

"Good gracious! Is this the beauty?" thought I; and Carrol fell back a step or two.

"Are you Miss Carmody?" she asked. "I am," I replied, holding out my hand; "and let me welcome you;" when, turning from me, she gently pulled forward into the room the loveliest little child I had ever beheld in my life, with large, soul-lit brown eyes and sunny hair, the exact color of our lost darling's.

"This is Miss Ashbell," said the maid; "and I am to stay or go back, as you see fit."

I looked at Carrol. He indulged in a long, under-the-breath whistle.

Helen buried her face in the sofa cushions and laughed hysterically.

The child came forward, and holding out her little hands, said, with a pretty drawl:

"I am to love you, and you are to love me. Aunt said so."

I went on my knees on one side of her, and Helen went down on her knees on the other, and we kissed her till her dimpled cheeks glowed again (you see the house had been so lonely without our little sister), while Carrol looked on with astonishment, admiration and tenderness blended in his handsome face, and Will stole in with the only bud from my precious tearose, the stem carefully stripped of its thorns, and put it in her hand.

"Thank you, boy," she said. "I will have you for a brother; and you, too," looking with a bright smile into Carrol's face. "There's an angel at home, in a big picture, with hair and eyes like yours."

Carrol caught her up in his arms, and away with her to mother's room. And there she had no sooner said "my papa and mamma are both in heaven," than mother burst out in a blessed fit of weeping that left a rainbow behind it. And from that moment the weight began to be lifted from her brain, and soon I had to resign my position as housekeeper, for we had our mother back again as she used to be of old—a little quieter in her ways, perhaps, but just as sweet, as kind, as unselfish as ever.

And Carrol's picture of "Miss Ashbell" gained him a place on the walls of the academy that autumn; and Will, who entered college last week, never ran away from her again, but has ever since been giving her roses freed from thorns, as he did the first night she came among us, bringing light and happiness—God bless her!—to our sorrow-clouded house.

And I often think, looking at the two heads (there is only four years' difference in their ages) bending over the same book, that some day Will will tell her the old, old story, and she will listen to him with a smile.

"I shouldn't wonder if you were right, Brownie," said my husband—how I laugh when I think of my jealous fears about him once on a time—"you almost always are."

And aunt's speculation turned out splendidly (she is still living, a hale old woman of seventy-five), and she insisted upon our accepting what she called father's share, and that share was no inconsiderable one.

And the seven-roomed house has grown to a twelve-roomed one—Betty, by the by, has allowed her daughter to assist her in the housework—and the twenty-five by twenty-five garden to a hundred by a hundred, my corner just filled with rose bushes.

And everything has prospered with us, and no lengthening shadows have fallen upon our path since that rosy June afternoon we so unwillingly opened the door to let in the darling who loved us, as we loved her at first sight—sweet, brown-eyed, golden-haired Miss Ashbell.—Waverley Magazine.

The British Income Tax.

The income tax was introduced into England by William Pitt in 1799 under the stress of the French war. It ceased in 1816, but was revived by Sir Robert Peel in 1842, and extended by Gladstone in 1853. From being a temporary war tax it has now become a permanent part of the British financial system, and is resorted to by every Chancellor who finds himself in difficulties.

DEADLY "MILK SICK WEED."

Tennessee Cattle Eat It, and Those Who Drink Their Milk Die.

From time to time in the past five decades Tennesseans have been stirred to a profound sense of interest in the State's mysterious malady, "milk sickness," as its deadly reappearance in certain sections of the State has been followed by fatal results to human beings and to stock, says the Louisville Courier-Journal. No one has ever discovered the cause of the malady from which death relieves the victim after such physical agony as almost deprives the human species of the power of speech, and dumb crutes express their sufferings by frenzied search for water to cool the thirst which consumes them. Once by a stream, they plunge or fall into it and quickly drink themselves to death.

The fatal sickness is known to a limited extent in several sections of the State, but exists principally near Sparta, in White County. It is contracted through drinking the milk of cows that have eaten a certain weed known as the "milksick weed," which looks somewhat like clover and grows thickly on the infested land. But what constitutes the poison in the weed is no more determined to-day than it was when first located by the keen-witted, nature-wise mountaineers, who have been its chief victims. It has been ascribed at various times to minerals whose poison is absorbed in the roots of the "milksick" plant; to a vapor from some fungus growth, and to the action of the dew producing, in connection with the life of the plant, a certain poisonous acid. But all of these by practical science. On the largest theories have failed under tests applied by practical science. On the largest infested section known to exist in the limits of the State, "Milksick Mountain," in White County, no mineral whatever exists; cattle which ate the "milksick weed" after the dew had drieked in agony just as those who ate it when the dew was fresh and sparkling, and the strictest search failed to find any fungus growth whatever.

Eat Apples and Be Healthy.

Hail to the apple. It is the latest entry in the life-preserver class offered by the scientists who are ever seeking means to prolong life and relieve the ills that flesh is heir to. In a well known sanitarium for nervous diseases there are numerous placards on the walls of the gymnasium, the dressing rooms and the halls, which read: "Eat apples!" Apples are served in every form—raw, baked and stewed. When they are served raw the patients are expected to pare them and to save the stomach from the hard work of digesting the skin.

The apple has in it the elements which go to the making of good red blood; it has a goodly quantity of iron inside its red, yellow or green covering. The apple has in it both a tonic acid and a fattening sugar; it is a real food. There are two large divisions into which apples may be put—the acutely acid and the subacid. Not every one can eat greenings, with their wholesome sourness; those who cannot can try the bellflower or the russet, which are less acid, but equally nourishing.

Not every one can eat apples uncooked without suffering from indigestion; those who cannot should eat them baked. Baking is better than stewing, for the fruit juices are kept inside the skin and changed gradually. So why not eat apples and see what they will do for your blood, for your nerves and for your pleasure?—Salt Lake Telegram.

The Sultan's Jewels.

A correspondent, writing from Constantinople to a Paris journal, claims, as the result of personal inspection, to give details of the amazing collection of jewels in the Sultan's treasury. The turbans of all the Sultans since Mahomet II. are there, all glittering with rare and large gems of the purest water. There are also the royal throne of Persia, carried off by the Turks in 1514, and covered with more than 20,000 rubies, emeralds and fine pearls, and also the throne of Suleiman I., from the dome of which there hangs over the head of the Caliph an emerald six inches long and four deep. These two thrones are the chief objects in the collection.—London Globe.

Jap Age of Retirement.

A Japanese officer who has not reached the rank of major at the age of forty-eight is compulsorily retired as unworthy of further service.