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MAUD STOWELL.

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The Story of a Country Girl's City Experience.

"I WISH you would give it up, Maude. I cannot bear the thought of your going to the city to work, and your papa and I need you so much at home, dear," said Mrs. Stowell.

It was a sultry morning in July. Mother and daughter were on the cool, vine-covered, back gallery; Mrs. Stowell busily preparing vegetables for dinner, while Maude impatiently drummed upon the floor.

"But, mamma, I'm sick and tired of this dismal round of dish-washing, churning, chasing after hens, and drudgery of all kinds. Susie has everything nice, while I must go round as 'tacky' as can be; and she says she knows I can get a place at Brown & Greenwood's store."

"But, Maude, when we get the farm clear again, you can have nice clothes, too. It won't be long now, only one more good crop, and we will be free of debt, and the prospect is fine for a good crop," said Mrs. Stowell, hopefully. "Besides, I don't think Susie Griffin is the most refined girl in the world, and I'd rather you didn't associate with her."

"Oh, yes! There you go, mamma. It seems that you object to everybody I like. I'm sure Susie has more beaux than any girl in this neighborhood, she dresses better, too, and she is just as jolly as can be, and as for our ever having anything—I've given up hopes," said Maude, a little ashamed, however, as she saw the look of pained surprise on her mother's face.

"But, Maudie, clothes are not everything, and as for beaux, I'd far rather you never had any, than that you should go with the class of young men Susie associates with; and, Maude, you have a great many pleasures. You have your pony to ride, and there's your choir practice once a week, and——"

"Oh, yes; but what does that amount to? Susie says she goes to the theatre every few days, and there's the matinees, and the balls are something grand, Susie says."

"God forbid that you should ever attend a public ball, Maude," said Mrs. Stowell, anxiously.

"Well, but mamma, they are not public. Everybody has invitations, and Susie says that the ball dresses are a dream of beauty," said Maude.

"Maude, listen to your mother this once. That is just the trouble; everybody does have invitations, and you will find that all kinds of men and women attend them. Now, give up this idea of going to the city. You know your father will never consent to your going, and I would rather you did nearly anything else in the world than that you should be under the influence of Susie Griffin."

"Yes, of course you can run Susie down, but she is a good girl, and I never had so much fun as when with her," said Maude.

Mrs. Stowell sighed, but said no more. Maude was the only daughter, and had been petted and indulged all her life, until at eighteen she was willful and selfish; her many good qualities had become almost obscured by self-indulgence. She thought, as alas, many others in this old world think, life is given us for pleasure alone. Her patient, loving parents had tried to teach her that duty, lovingly and faithfully performed, is the true source of happiness.

Mr. and Mrs. Stowell had been very unfortunate financially. They had experienced many crop failures, due to both flood and drouth. Mr. Stowell had been crippled with rheumatism for a long time, and unable to work, had mortgaged the farm to obtain the necessaries of life. Death had entered, and after a long illness, claimed Francis, the little son, who was idolized by his mother, and the pride and joy of his father's heart. This had been several years previous to the opening of our story, but Mrs. Stowell had never been the same since; it seemed she could not see the faults of her daughter.

A few days after the above conversation, Susie Griffin came out from the city, bringing some friends to spend Sunday with her parents. With them came a certain young man who had condescended (?) to pay some attention to Maude. Susie chaffed in public, but confidentially told her that she "never would forgive her if she cut her out." That Louis Rowland was a "great catch."

He was worthless, shallow, conceited and unprincipled, under a rather handsome and dandyish exterior, just the kind of a fellow to catch the fancy of our foolish Maude. Her vanity was flattered as much by the envious looks of some of the other girls, as by Susie's protestations of undying hate, if Maude should "cut her out."

Mrs. Stowell not being well, Maude attended church alone, and the services over, accompanied Susie and her friends home. Louis Rowland proceeded in flattering and glowing terms, to picture life in the city, and to scoff at the simple, modest country girls, country manners and dress being made the special object of ridicule, until poor Maude felt her cheeks burn with shame. Oh, why would her father persist in staying in the country? She was filled with resentment against him. Fortunately her fond parents did not know the mind of their child that afternoon.

"But, Miss Maude, you were never intended for a country girl. You are much too pretty and graceful," said Louis, with a look of admiration so plain as to cause Maude to blush. "You should come to town where you would be appreciated, and where you could see something."

"That's just what I have been telling her this long time," said Susie. "Maude, suppose you get ready and go back with us. We go at 9.30, and you can start in the morning. I'm sure you can get in at Brown and Greenwood's."

"Yes, do, Miss Maude. We will have jolly times when you are one of us," said Louis.

"I wouldn't mope away my life in this poky place for anybody, Maude. Get ready and go. What do you say?" said Susie, coaxingly.

"Well, I'll go, but I can't go this afternoon," said Maude, thinking of laundering and packing her best dresses.

There was a stormy scene at Mr. Stowell's farm the next morning. Although her father have ever been kind and indulgent to her, Maude found that he could be very stern and unrelenting, and now that she had determined to disobey him in a matter which was of vital importance, he said sternly:

"If you go away, after all your mother and I have said, you may stay."

* * * * * *

Tuesday morning found Maude standing, grip in hand, in the depot of the town where Susie worked, a stranger and alone. Her heart was very heavy, for she could not shake off the memory of her mother's tear-wet, sorrowful face. She stood, looking around in a bewildered way, not knowing which way to turn, when Susie exclaimed:

"So you came? I'm so glad, Maude," passing her arm around Maude's waist affectionately. "I had no end of a time getting off, I'll tell you. Old Brown was as cross as a bear. I had to tell him all kinds of stuff. But you're 'right in it,' for ther's a vacancy. One of the girls is sick and you can get her place. It's a shirt waist counter, and is 'dead easy.' I'll tell you, Maude, you're lucky. We'll leave your grip at my room and go up right away, for I only have two hours."

Mr. Brown, the senior partner of the firm, liked the appearance of Maude, and although she did not know it, her soft brown eyes wore a very appealing look, as Susie explained her merits, adding such embellishments as she thought best.

The next day found Maude duly installed behind a stuffy counter. It was terribly hot, and before night she caught herself longing for the cool, shaded hammock on the lawn at home, where she had spent so many happy hours, listening in a dull way to the cackling hens and crowing cocks, the twitter of birds in the branches overhead, and the humming of a thousand insects.

A few days later a couple of fashionably dressed women came up to her counter and asked to see some shirt waists. After turning over half the stock, one exclaimed pettishly: "Can't you show us something decent? These things are perfectly horrid."

Maude was "new," and hardly knew what to say, but her quick temper got the better of her, and she said, "If you don't like these you will have to go somewhere else."

The lady appeared astonished, and murmuring something about 'reporting," walked away. When six o'clock came, and Maude was pinning on her hat, one of the clerks came to tell her that Mr. Brown wanted her in the office. She hastened to obey, and was curtly told that her services would not be required apy longer.

"What have I done, Mr. Brown?" asked Maude, ready to cry.

"No impudent clerks employed in this establishment," he condescended to say, waving her towards the door.

Poor Maude hardly knew what to do after this. Discharged without a recommendation, she was compelled to do as Susie advised, try to get work in the bagging mill.

She succeeded, after several trials, to get a place as "can carrier." She was dazed, and suffered greatly with headaches at first, caused from the ceaseless roar of the great machinery. She soon found out what the life of a mill girl really is. The majority of the girls were coarse and decidedly fast, and she found herself an object of curiosity and ridicule. The girls nicknamed her "The Angel." She was subject to insult, for there are so many of these girls who are, alas, far from purity, that the name, "Mill Girl," is a stigma of disgrace.

The hot, dusty, lint-laden air, the coarse, foul language, and the incessant toil, the long hours, and dreary grind of the mill soon grew almost unendurable to country-bred Maude. True, she had evenings at the theatre, with Louis and Susie, but as she became better acquainted with Louis, his polished manners gradually vanished, and his true nature was revealed to her. She attended a few of the "grand balls," and instead of being "delighted," as Susie had glowingly said, she was thoroughly disgusted. A few months passed away, and found Maude a disillusioned, a very homesick and repentant girl. Oh, how she longed to lay her aching head on her dear mother's breast and cry out her misery. But those last words of her father still rang in her ears: "If you go away after all your mother and I have said, you can stay."

She was too proud to go back. She longed unspeakably for the quiet home that she had thought so hateful. She would have given anything for a ride through the wood on the back of her pony, Jack; but the cry of her heart was: "Oh, mamma! mamma! papa! papa! Oh, to be at home once more!" If only she could ask and receive forgiveness for her past selfishness; and she could see how very selfish she had been. If she could only write to her mother! But no; her father had said: "You can't write. If you cannot obey us, you must choose between us and those people."

She found the pleasures of the city are not for the poor. They are too expensive. There was no pleasure in visiting the shops to look at the grand displays of beautiful things, when she had no money to buy anything but the cheapest.

One cold, misty morning in December, Maude hurriedly dressed, for she had overslept herself. She had gone to bed with a severe headache, and was almost ill, after cooking her meager breakfast on the gasoline stove, joint property between her and Susie. She breakfasted alone now, for there was a coldness between the two girls. Maude had grown so "goody goody" of late that Susie declared, "she could stay at home and mope if she wanted to. I will not make any special effort to get up unnecessarily early" (as had been her wont to do at first) "just to keep Maude company."

Half past six saw Maude hurrying through the dull grey of the street. The great doors closed at seven sharp, and no one was admitted after that hour. Besides she was liable to lose her place. Fortunately she arrived in time. She had risen to the dignity of "backtender" now, on one of the great "rovers," and the pay was a little better than that of the "can carrier." It proved to be a very trying morning. The number of pounds of jute run off of each machine in a day shows the amount earned by the two girls in charge. This morning the jute ran very badly: the machine had to be stopped every few minutes. Maude was very nervous, almost desperate, for her pocket book was nearly empty. It was strictly against the rules to clean any part of the machinery without first informing the "front tender" of the intention to do so. But Maude, in her anxiety, forgot this. Mamie Ogden started the machine; there was a horrible scream from Maude, as her fingers were drawn into the terrible machine and mangled into a shapeless mass. Mamie instantly shut off the machine, or Maude's whole body would have been crushed, or her arm torn from its socket.

The girls gathered around, some screaming, some almost fainting. Poor Maude was carried insensible to the office, and the factory physician immediately called. At first it was thought her hand would have to be amputated, but kind Dr. Bland did his very best, and by the help of a skilled nurse saved it.

Mamie Ogden, who knew Susie, where she worked and roomed, immediately telephoned to the store the shocking news. Susie was horrified, and tearful at sight of Maude's terrible plight, and immediately telegraphed the news to Mr. and Mrs. Stowell.

Pale, and much shaken, Mrs. Stowell carried the telegram to her husband. He read it, his stern, sunburned face growing pale.

"Get out my things, wife," he said. "I'll catch the first train, and go and bring her home. I've had my lesson. I've been too hard on the poor little bird."

Mrs. Stowell put her arms lovingly around his neck, her heart too full for words. She had heard from the Griffins, from time to time, of the trials of her daughter; also of the change in her, and she wisely guessed that after all, her careful training had not been in vain. She had bided her time, trusting that all would end well.

After what seemed to him an age, Mr. Stowell arrived at his destination, and was shown to the door of Maude's room. He gazed in astonishment and consternation at his daughter's pale, woe-be-gone, little face on the pillow, and then she became conscious of his presence. With a glad cry of "Papa!" she was in his arms, sobbing out her repentance.

A few weeks later, Maude, with her hand still bandaged and in a sling, was able to walk about home, on a tour of inspection. Oh, the sweetness of that word, Home! Never had her mother been so dear to her. Never before had she appreciated either father or mother. The cows and horses had been visited in turn, and received a share of petting. She fed the hens and pigeons, the ducks and turkeys, and, as they flocked around her as of old, Maude declared she be willing to "chase hens all the rest of her life." The orchard, meadow, fields, vineyard, and garden had all been inspected and happily commemted on; lastly the rose-garden, the flower beds, the lawn, and trees surrounding the house were gone over and admired for about the "fifteenth time."

"Mamma," said Maude, "how Susie Griffin can prefer the city to this—and how I could ever have imagined that I should prefer it, is beyond my comprehension."—Farm and Ranch.

The Largest Flower.

The Rafflesia is a strange plant, says American Gardening. It grows in Sumatra and derives it name from Sir Stamford Raffles, governor of Sumatra, at one time, and his friend, Doctor Arnold, a naturalist. They were the first white men to discover the wonderful plant. It is said to be the largest and most magnificent flower in the world. It is composed of five roundish petals, each a foot across and of a brick-red color, covered with numerous irregular yellowish white swellings. The petals surround a cup nearly a foot wide, the margin of which bears the stamens.

The cup is filled with a fleshy disk, the upper surface of which is everywhere covered with projections like miniature cow's horns. The cup when free from its contents would hold about twelve pints of water. The flower weighs fifteen pounds. It is very thick, the petals being three-quarters of an inch in thickness. With its beauty one is led to expect sweetness, but its odor is that of tainted beef, and Doctor Arnold supposed that even the flies were deceived by the smell and were depositing their eggs in the thick disk, taking it for a piece of carrion.

LINNET SINGING.

The Pleasure of Thousands and the Business of Scores.

In the little, swarming streets off Whitechapel Road, down through Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, linnet-singing is the pastime of thousands and the business of scores of men, who will bet themselves to a standstill over the sweet-voiced rivalries of two wee, brown little birds caged on the wall of some public house whose reputation makes respectability timorous of intrusion. The hard-face "East Ender," whose chiefest joy is a bloody "limited round go" in the prize ring of Harry Jacob's Wonderland in Whitechapel, may be seen next night in the back room of Tom Symond's "pub," sitting in breathless silence, and behind locked doors, with a hundred of his kind, while his linnet sings a match for "pleasant song," and a stake of ten shillings a side.

There was never a more incongruous sport than this, yet despite its gambling interest, inseparable from all kinds of popular English sport, it is to rejoice that so sentimental and whimsical a pastime makes many a bright spot in the clouded life of the East End. To those who do not know, it may be well to explain that the vocal school of the linnet in the world of sport is as thoroughly systematized and as fast bound by tradition as the preparatory training for grand opera. This is no haphazard issue of betting which of two birds will sing longest, or loudest, or sweetest. Every detail of a match is fixed by unwritten law molded through many generations of referees, timekeepers, scorers and owners.

From time beyond reckoning, the linnet's singing vocabulary has been fixed and set into the two divisions known as "pleasant song" and "rough song." The first consists of a list of refrains, each of which contains more than four notes or syllables. If a match is made for "pleasant song," then the contesting birds must stick to their more complicated strains, else they are scored against. In such a match, if the linnet interjects one or more of the shorter or "rough songs," each fault is chalked against him by the score-keeper, and appears in the final totals. If the stipulation is for "rough song," then the bird may use these contracted or easier sequences of notes, and receive perfect marks. The birds which can be backed to sing only "pleasant song" are the grand opera stars of the bird stage in East London. —Ralph D. Paine, in Outing.

Discovery of the Ichthyosaur.

Ichthyosaurus is a name much jested with, because it rivals the mastodon as a most widely known fossil, dating back to its discovery by Sir Everard R. Home, between 1814 and 1819, in the marine deposits of Lyme-Regis, England. The name, signifying "fish-lizard," shows that this animal impressed Konig, its describer, as having a fish-like backbone combined with a shoulder girdle of the lizard or saurian type. This term could not have been more happily chosen, because, while retaining the skeleton of an atavistic and extremely ancient lizard, the ichthyosaur evolved a most strikingly modern external likeness to certain very familiar animals of the saurian.—From Henry Fairchild Osborn's "Ichthyosaurs," in the Century.

Looked After.

A young man who wished to be appointed a county police constable put in an appearance one morning accompanied by his mother, and was taken in hand for examination by the inspector. This progressed satisfactorily until the inspector observed: "Of course you are aware you'll have a lot of night work to do? You are not afraid of being out late, I suppose?" Before the candidate could reply his mother electrified the official with the statement: "That'll be all right, sir, never fear; his grandmother is going round with him the first two or three nights, until he gets used to it."—Birmingham (England) Post.

Czar's Dining House.

In the czar's palace at Peterhof there is a summer dining house so arranged that there need not be any servants present during the meal. A bell is touched at the end of every course and the table and all its contents then descend through the floor, to reappear laden with the dishes for the next course.

A new use of vanadium is announced in a forthcoming invention by Wilhelm von Siemens. It concerns a vanadium glow lamp.