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By the Firelight.

It was evening. From where the sun had set rose a red glow melting softly into the cold, blue gray sky. The sky tint, but colder, bluer, harder in tone, was repeated in the line of mountains stretching away to the south. Among the shifting heaps of fallen leaves shone gleams of color, but the moss had turned to brown, and in the cold, windy evening the lately denuded trees seemed to shiver.

A woman came out of a pasture with a pail of milk in her hand. A slight wisp of a creature, her cotton gown hung limply about her thin form. She cowered as the wind struck her and coughed painfully, yet she lingered. She was too much a child of nature to explain how the autumn days made her feel both forlorn and expectant, and yet was perhaps the more affected by the moods of the great mother not attempting to translate them into human needs. The clatter of hoofs made her turn slowly. One glance and her heart gave a leap, sending the warm color to her cheek. By the time the horseman had reached her the color was gone.

"Good evening. Does Uncle Billy Grimes live here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you suppose he would be willing to put me up to-night?"

"I reckon. 'Light an I'll take your nag."

The gentleman hesitated as if his gallantry would not permit him to allow a woman to put up his horse, but, seeming to think better of it, thanked her, and taking his saddlebags, turned toward the house.

At the door he was met by an old woman, who, learning his wish, cordially made him welcome, offering him a seat by side of the hearth, on which a great fire was burning. He tilted back on the short legged chair with the feeling of warmth and well being which follow a long, cold ride, and soon found himself gently slipping into the mood he had been trying all day to cultivate. This had been his home and after half a lifetime spent away he had returned to the land of his childhood only to find the Carolina mountains less grand than others he had seen, and the simple life of the people, which in moments of sentiment he had remembered as idyllic, rough, uncouth and cheerless. He was too far removed from their life for sympathy, too close to feel the picturesque interest and pleasure of a real stranger. These people were more or less nearly related to him, yet they seemed another race of beings.

He had left his mountain home a mere boy and had gone west, where a new life opened for him. Something in his nature always made him reject what was coarse and vulgar, and when he became suddenly rich his native gentleness and simplicity of manner stood him instead of breeding and education, disarming criticism, with the quick perception and imitative faculty which were his birthright, he had largely repaired the deficiencies of his early training acquiring much of the manner and tone of people of culture. Now he had come back and was a stranger in his own land.

But the bright firelight dancing on the wall illumined the rough interior of the farmhonse kitchen, and he bagan to feel less remote, less offended by the meaness of his surroundings. Memories of his childhood rose before him as he watched the young woman in her preparation for supper. She had mixed up the corn bread, and now knelt on the floor besides the hearth molding it into loaves and putting them into a large iron skillet. The firelight flashed on the tin pan gave a ruddy glow to her dull, yellowish hair to red gold. As the stranger watched her something rose in this throat.

"Nancy!"

She turned suddenly.

"Chris!"

"I did not know you at first."

"I reckon I've changed," she said sadly.

"Not so much. It was rather dark. It takes the firelight to make you look natural. But how came you here?"

"Uncle Billy married my aunt, as she wanted somebody ter help her, an I hadn't no home."

"Not married?"

"No." She picked up her pan and left the room.

"It cannot be she has waited all these years for me," he thought. "Of course not; such constancy is not to be found among women of her sort. How faded she is! These mountain folks, particularly the women, grow old early. Poor thing! I suppose she has work hard, and she never was very strong. Why, she can't be much older than Lois Ellison." He shuddered at the contrast. Miss Ellison was his partner's sister. They were the best of friends. He had proposed to her annually for the last five years, and yet they still remained friends. She treated him kindly and without coquetry and pleaded a prior attachment. As the other man was dead Chris waited and hoped.

Sometimes he had been tempted to doubt her reason for refusing him, but it only gave him pain, and he had always made it a rule never to doubt a lady's word. Circumstances had now and then obliged him to be false in this principle, but he had lived up to it when he could. His romantic fancy was touched by the constancy of the fair, cultivated woman of the world, but in this mountain girl such a sentiment seemed painfully incongruous. He knew too well that the position of an old maid here was one neither of honor nor profit.

Uncle Billy came in and greeted Chris with warmth, and they sat down to supper.

"So you've come back ter yer old home," began Uncle Billy. "Wher's yer companion?"

"I haven't any."

"Not got none?"

"No."

"Couldn't yer suit yerself out in Californy?"

"The girl I wanted didn't want me."

"I see. Wull, yer ought ter ha' taken a wife wi' er. 'Taint ter late. We've some pretty gals here. (At this point Nancy, who had gone for a can of cherries, re-entered the room) 'Yer recklect Sally Peters? Uster spark her, didn't yer? Wull, she's got two gals as purt as their maw. Reckon one on 'em ood suit yer."

Chris looked up, caught Nancy's eye and frowned slightly. His own feeling responed to the look in her face. What to a real stranger might have been amusing jarred upon nim.

After supper they sat around the fire talking of old times. Chris learned with a strange feeling of being under a spell that all the boys he remembered of his own age were either dead or had become grandfathers, yet, he had not thought of growing old. Pretty soon Uncle Billy rose and said:

"I reckon me an my wife'll go ter bed. Nancy'll keep yer company," and he retired to the room beyond.

Chris sat looking into the fire. Nancy drew a chair near him. He was scarcely aware of her presence, his thoughts being far away. At last she spoke:

"I have waited long fur yer Chris."

He started.

"Did you believe I would come?" he asked.

"Yes."

Vividly he recalled the moment when, a boy, he had bidden goodby to a rosy cheeked girl "Will you wait for me, Nancy?" he had said. "I'll come back and marry you some day." Idle words, containing more of feeling than resolve. He had long forgotten, till the firelight reflected upon her face flashed into a dark corner of his brain, and it had all come back to him. He could say nothing, and she began to tell him of the long, weary years she had waited. She had no misgivings; among her own people she was accounted a simple creature. She knew nothing of the gulf separating her from her old sweetheart. He had not married, and he had come back as he said he would; that was enough for her.

He listened, pained but fascinated. Her speech, uncouth as it was, still had something of dignity in its old English form. He had not the heart to wound her with the truth. Most men would have thought such cruelty the truest kindness; a finer sense restrained him. Perhaps experience had taught him that a forlorn hope may be dearer than attainment. He realized that an illusion which has been growing up in a woman's heart for twenty years cannot be shattered at a blow without crushing the woman.

"Poor child," he said tenderly; she had been telling him of her loneliness.

"But you're here now, Chris." She drew nearer him and laid her cheek against his arm with simple, childlike confidence. He started slightly. It seemed wrong to touch her, and yet if he put her away from him he would have to tell her why.

"This is an evening out of the old time, Nancy. You and I are a girl and boy again, do you understand?" he said putting his arm about her waist.

"Yes," she said, with a happy little laugh.

Soon he disenaged himself and rose saying that he was tired and would like to go to bed. She went with him to his room, and before leaving him lifted her lips for a kiss. Again he hesitated, and stooping kissed her forehead. He went to bed, but not to sleep. The sense of the irreparable wrong he had done this girl burned into his heart, tender with its own pain. Wild thoughts of self immolation occurred to him, only to be checked by the conviction of its hopelessness. She would not be less lonely with him. They were utter strangers, for how little of the boy she had loved was left in the man, and how lost she would be in the world where he lived!

He rose early, and going into the kitchen, found Mrs. Grimes dressing a chicken for breakfast. The old woman gave him a knowing look and remarked with a chuckle:

"Nancy's ben a-waitin fur yer a mighty while, an here yer air shur nuf."

"Did she tell you so?"

"No; I knowed hit 'thout her tellin me. She ain't like other folks, Nancy ain't; she's a sort o'fool body."

"I do not think so."

"Yer don't?"

"She dosen't seem strong. I'm afraid she works too hard."

"Us mounting folks all hef ter work. Nancy ain't stout. She's got the consumption, an the doctor says she can't live the winter out."

Chris was going to speak, but the woman's cold, hard face checked him.

"Who is your doctor?" he said at last.

"Nobody yer know; a young feller—he ain't like Dr. Crain, he ain't; he's got larnin an knows what's the matter wi' yer right off."

What is his name?"

"Jim Banks. He lives in Vadeville."

Chris wrote down the name, and a plan began to form in his mind.

After breakfast he took his departue. As he was starting Nancy came up from the springhouse.

"Where air yer goin?" she asked in some alarm.

"To Cranberry."

"Yer'll come back?"

"Yes, some time."

She looked at him with a patient, trusting smile.

"Goodby! God bless you!" he said and rode away, wondering why it is that a strong and constant affection is so seldom mutual.

As he got on the cars at Cranberry a gay voice greeted him:

"Hullo Warren! I'm right gald to see you!" It was a young drummer with whom Chris was pretty well acquainted. He, too, had been up in the mountains and was full of amusing stories, from which it soon appeared that he had been flirting outrageously with the mountain lasses.

"Look here, my boy," said Chris after a time, "let me tell you something. You can outlive all your early habits, you may outlive most of your friends, but you'll never outlive the promise you make a woman, and if you don't want to discover some day that you are an unmitigated scamp, you'd better make none that you don't mean to keep."—Lorraine Stanley in Washington Post.

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Christian Endeavor Convention.

The third annual convention of the Christian Endevor Society of Maryland, which will be held in Baltimore to-day and to-morrow, Dec. 8th and 9th, promises to surpass in interest and number any that has yet been held.

A special rate of two cents per mile has been granted by all the principal railroads leading to Baltimore. Tickets will be valid for return passage until Dec. 12th.

The Convention will be opened with a Prayer and Praise Service. Rev. C. A, Fulton, Baltimore, will deliver the address of welcome, which will be responded to on behalf of the the Union and Delegates by Rev. Edwin H. Belk, of Hagerstown. Rev. Thos H. Dewis, D. D., Westminister will preach the Convention Sermon. Reports from Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. W. H. G. Belt, and State Supt. of Junior Work, Rev. W. J. Johnson will be heard.

An open Conference on Committee Work, The Pastor's Hour and Free Parliament, will be interesting as well as practical features of the Convention.

Among those who will make addresses are Rev. J. T. Bockley, D. D., Phila., on "Faithfulness to Duty," Prof. Frank K. Sanders, Ph. D., Yale University on "Why and How to Study the Bible?" Mr. Luther D. Wishard, International Secretary of Y. M. C. A., New York on "Can the World be Evangelized during this Generation?" Rev. Sylvester Stall, Phila. on Methods, their Value and Limitation," Rev W. H. McMillan, D. D., Alleghany, Pa. on "The Secret of Power" and Rev. T. S. Hamlin, D. D., Washington on "Soul Winning."

A Junior Rally, Friday afternoon, will be one of the features of the Convention and will be addressed by Rev. E. A. Lawerence, Rev. E. E. Weaver and Mrs. Alice May Scudder. Mrs. Scudder will also address the Conventian in the evening and conduct an open conference on Junior Work. Arrangements have also been made for simultaneous Meetings, to be held in the Boundary Avenue Presbyterian Church, at which addresses will be made by Rev. J. T. Bockley, D. D,, Phila., Rev. D. L. Greenfield, D. D., Chestertown, Md., Rev. W. H. McMillan, D D, Alleghany, Pa, and Rev. T S Hamlin, D D Washington.



To solve the problem requires thought. But the simple *fact* is known to many—that Dr. Fenner's Golden Relief cures Consumption. It does it every time and in every case, when used before the lungs have become too far disorganized. Here's a typical case: Miss Jones, aged 20, has lost 25 pounds, cheeks have the "hectic flush"; coughs and raises all the time; has just returned from the South, where she spent the winter. Did not improve.

She takes 5 drops of Dr. Fenner's Golden Relief, on a small lump of sugar, once in 2 hours. Improvement begins at once. In 2 weeks she has gained 10 pounds. In 6 weeks she weighs 130 and is CURED. The remedy is a SPECIFIC in INFLAMMATION. No inflammation, no soreness, no consumption. Thus it cures a long list of ailments from a common sore throat, to a grave bronchitis, asthma and consumption, from a toothache to a grave neuralgia, from a headache to a grave rheumatism anda from summer complaint to a grave dysentery, cholera or flux. This wide range of application has sometimes unjustly caused it to be dubbed a "cure all." But it isn't. It cures one disease and that is *inflammation*. Inflammation cannot exist in its presence—and that "*solves the problem.*" One tablespoonful dose cures La Grippe. It never disappoints. Contains no opiates, narcotics or mineral poisons. Perfectly safe. Money refunded if satisfaction not given. Take home a bottle to-day.