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## GRAND

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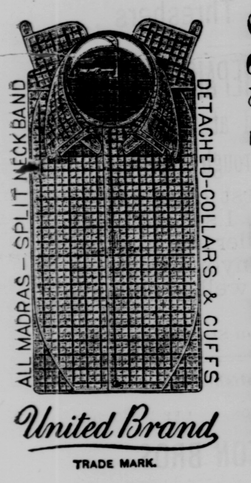
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### A LITTLE WILD APPLE TREE.

There's a little wild-apple tree out in the pasture,
Crooked and stunted and queer in its shape,
And it waves its long arms as the summer winds sway it,
As if it were trying its best to escape.

I have never found fruit on its gnarled, twisted branches;
Green moss clothes its trunk from its boughs to its feet,
But it blossoms each spring with the best of the orchard,
And, oh, but its delicate blossoms are sweet!

On the north by the orchard the pasture is bounded.
There decorous apple trees stand in straight rows;
You can see that each tree has been carefully planted
And feels it must carefully heed how it grows.

But 'tis the wild tree that the "high hole" has chosen;
She found such a beautiful place for her nest.
The orchard is pleasant—I highly respect it—
But the little wild apple tree 'tis I love best!
—Margaret Vandegrift in Youth's Companion.

## A RHINE STORY.

The Misses Ladford walked across the road from the German station to the small hotel.

"And now," complained the elder Miss Ladford, "I suppose we shall have more unintelligible argument at this ridiculous hotel. Not a soul to speak English or French, and"—

"We shall manage," said her young sister, hopefuily. The porter carrying their luggage pushed open the door, and they stepped into a big, square room, with a pewter covered bar at the side. A few men were playing with grubby cards in a corner. The proprietor shuffled forward and took his pipe from his mouth reluctantly.

"Bah!" cried the elder Miss Ladford.

"That's not German," remarked her young sister cheerfully. "Kellner, ein zimmer."

If young Miss Ladford had known the German for hotel proprietor, she would not have called him a waiter. It was unfortunate, because the proprietor's brow clouded at the word "kellner," and he appeared to be instructing the porter to take the luggage outside. The two ladies stared at each other distressedly.

"Can I be of any use?"

"Mr. Wallis!" cried the young sister delightedly.

"Mr. Wallis!" remarked Miss Ladford distantly.

In a few words the young man explained everything to the offended hotel proprietor; in a few more words he informed the ladies that he, too, had arrived by the train from Berlin, and that, finding the last train for Luxembourg had gone, he had said a few words—

"I am glad you did that," said Miss Ladford.

—and had come straight across to the hotel. Mr. Mark Wallis further mentioned that he had ordered supper for one; while the ladies were up stairs he would amend the order and make it supper for three. A stout, apple faced maid appeared and prepared to conduct them stolidly up the broad wooden staircase to their room.

"Mr. Wallis," said Miss Ladford, "we quarreled, I'm afraid, at Baireuth.'

"No, no," replied the young man, flushing. "Don't dignify our argument to that extent. It was a mere difference of opinion." He glanced at the young sister, who was following the apple cheeked maid.

"You made some unkind remarks in your journal last winter about my playing, and I felt bound to tell you that I resented those criticisms. We had been good friends too."

"I tried to be fair, Miss Ladford. I had every reason not to be unkind."

"Every reason?"

"Every reason."

She hesitated a moment and then held out her hand.

"Shall we forget all about it, Mr. Wallis?"

"It will give me great pleasure," said the young man earnestly. And, being in a foreign land where courtly acts can be done without creating derision, he lifted her gloved hand and kissed it.

Such a supper party that night in the bare boarded dining room of the sleepy little hotel at Karthaus, and such determination on Mark Wallis' part to propitiate Miss Ladford—so much general good humor indeed that the chromo of the Emperor William on the walls stared as though half inclined to assume that the laughter approached leze majesty. Even the apple cheeked servant became infected by the general gayety and served the dishes with positive cheerfulness, crowning the evening, when supper was over and Mark Wallis had lighted a cigar and had said good night, by remarking (as she took the two pairs of shoes from the tired young women and closed their door) in a confidential whisper, "Jarring cross!" and disappeared with the air of one who has said a reassuring and a comforting word to English women in a strange land.

"He improves on acquaintance," remarked Miss Ladford.

"Who, dear?"

"Why, Mr. Wallis, of course."

"Oh!"

"I disliked him extremely when I met him at first."

"Because of that notice?"

"That was the principal cause."

"Musical critics," said the younger lady casually, "have a hard task to perform."

"And some of them hardly perform it. But I'm quite sure now, dear, that Mr. Wallis did not mean to be unfair." Miss Ladford went on argumentatively, as though trying to persuade her younger sister to abandon an indefensible position in the debate. "So much depends, Alice, on the point of view in these matters. Mark Wallis being so strong a Mozart worshiper, you see, he naturally enough"—

"Is Mr. Wallis going by our train in the morning?"

"I hope so," said Miss Ladford.

"You have changed your opinion, dear, about him? I'm so glad." Alice Ladford kissed her elder sister affectionately.

"A woman who doesn't change her opinion," said Miss Ladford dogmatically, "is as tiresome as one who never changes her hats. I don't know which is worse."

It seemed that everybody in the little hotel awoke early the following morning. At 6:30 the round cheeked maid came up with coffee and rolls, and these they had near to the open window that looked on the square in front of the station. Miss Ladford, in admirable spirits and enjoying now the whole adventure, saw Mr. Mark Wallis below and remarked to her young sister that she supposed she had better go down in order to make sure about the Luxembourg train. Alice Ladford cordially seconded this resolution and said that she for her part would rather stay up stairs and write.

"Train doesn't go till 8," said Mark Wallis cheerfully. "There's nothing to see at Karthaus, so I thought of having a look round."

"I am tired of sightseeing," remarked Miss Ladford. "This will have all the charm of novelty. May I come with you?"

"I want you to."

"Doesn't matter about a hat, does it? Nobody knows us."

"Nobody knows us here," he agreed lightly. "In town we are of course important people. At least you are. Critics don't count."

They walked down the principal lane of the village. The sun was in its pleasantly decorous mood, less obtrusive than it had been, but showing nevertheless a polite attention. Two stout matrons at their doorways remarked to each other confidentially that she was older than he, and after some haggling decided that there was a difference of five years.

"Nearly everything happens for the best in this world," said Mark Wallis. "If that train had not been late last night, it would have been long perhaps before I had a chance of making my peace with you."

"I cannot permit," she said quaintly, "any reference to a former discussion."

"As a matter of fact, I particularly want to be on good terms with you, Miss Ladford. I haven't many enemies, and I do not want to think of you as one of them."

"I believe," she said quietly, pulling a blade of grass as they walked along, "that we are going to be very excellent friends."

"I'm so glad!" he cried honestly. "Indeed, I hope that we shall be something more." She did not look at him, and he went on. "Do you know, Miss Ladford, I feel very much the want of companionship at home? I'm almost 28, but already I am beginning to dread the possibility of journeying through my life a lonely traveler. Twenty-eight is not too young for a man to marry, is it?"

She shook her head and put her hand for a moment to her throat. Her thoughts went back swiftly to her first and last proposal. Dear, dear, what a long time ago that was—nearly ten years ago, she feared! She remembered how she had refused the offer because she had an idea that it would be foolish to say "Yes" to the first. And since—Miss Ladford remembered this with a little sigh—there had not been a second.

"What I mean to say is," said Mark Wallis, with nervous enthusiasm, "that the time comes to every man when he meets some one he really likes. If he misses that chance, it is quite likely that an exactly similar opportunity may never occur again. And, although it may appear very sudden to you, Miss Ladford, it's not really sudden, you know."

The poor blade of grass was getting terribly maltreated. For a self possessed person, Miss Ladford appeared singularly tremulous. She found that when she lifted her eyes from the ground the neat little cottages danced.

"I think—I think we had better return," she said hesitatingly. "We mustn't miss the train, and we ought not to keep my sister waiting."

"Oh, Alice won't mind!" he said cheerfully.

"She's a dear girl," said Miss Ladford, endeavoring to regain her self possession. "Although she's my sister, I have never quarreled with her."

"She can keep a secret too."

"When you know her better, Mr. Wallis, you will find that she is quite unlike me. That is why we get on so well together, I think. I don't like to think that I shall ever have to say good by to her."

"It won't be quite saying goodby," urged Mark Wallis. "You see, a honeymoon"—

"We must talk about it," she interrupted shyly, "when we meet in town."

"I would rather know now," he said.

"Until we reach Luxembourg, then."

"No, no," he said good humoredly. He took her hand and placed it on his arm. "I must know now. Your sister will be anxious." Her hand trembled. "Point of fact, Miss Ladford, I want Alice to marry me as soon as we get back to town, if you don't mind."

The way seemed very long back to the little hotel, and the sunshine appeared strangely blurred. Nevertheless Miss Ladford, like a sensible woman, said no word until she reached the Bahnhof, where her pretty young sister was waiting. Then she went up to her and kissed her.

"I—I don't mind," she said unsteadily.—W. Pett Ridge in Woman at Home.

### His Regret.

"I regret to observe," said Skillton, "that there is to be another yacht race for the America's cup."

"Regret? Why, it indicates that England and the United States are coming together again!" said Jones.

"That's just it," said Skillton. "We were beginning to get along so nicely, and now all the old troubles will be reopened."—Harper's Bazar.

### TO A VIOLIN.

What wondrous power from heaven upon thee wrought?
What prisoned Ariel within thee broods?
Marvel of human skill and human thought,
Light as a dry leaf in the winter woods!

Thou mystic thing, all beautiful, what mind
Conceived thee, what intelligence began
And out of chaos thy rare shape designed,
Thou delicate and perfect work of man?

Across my hands thou liest mute and still;
Thou wilt not breathe to me thy secret fine;
Thy matchless tones the eager air shall thrill
To no entreaty or command of mine.

But comes thy master! Lo, thou yieldest all—
Passion and pathos, rapture and despair!
To the soul's need thy searching voice doth call,
In language exquisite beyond compare,

Till into speech articulate at last
Thou seemst to break, and thy charmed listener hears
Thee waking echoes of the vanished past,
Touching the source of gladness and of tears.

And with bowed head he lets the sweet wave roll
Across him, swayed by that weird power of thine,
And reverence and wonder fill his soul
That man's creation should be so divine.
—Celia Thaxter.

## THE THIRD POPLAR.

The day was cold. The gray sky promised the first December snow. Between one row and another of her embroidery Adriana thought what felicity it was to sit in the warmth of this sewing room. In this elegant nest, prepared by her Enrico, she realized all the love that he had sworn for her.

The new apartment, full of brightness and charm, was her own. She was at last Enrico's wife, the absolute queen over this enchanting kingdom. She rose from her seat, moved her feet over the downy carpet, undertook a pilgrimage through this miniature world, which had always been her dream and was now her dearest reality. This solitary journey had new attractions for her; these possessions appeared to her like a prize. As she went from one room to another she came upon one where Enrico wrote and studied. It was the first time, after two months of marriage, that she had set foot in this elegant room, which had an original look from its artistic disorder. She entered here, her heart touched. He was away from home and was ignorant of what she was thinking about him. No one, where he was, could speak of her, but she felt his presence in every minute particular, from the delicate perfume of the cigar clinging to the furniture even to the silver paper cutter between the pages of a book lying on the writing desk. Against the wall, behind the sofa on which she was sitting, hung a shield of plush, crossed by a band of rose colored silk. On this band she had embroidered a spray of forgetmenots. She had given this to him when they were engaged, and he had stuck their two photographs in it. She stood a moment to look at it, rose on the tips of her toes and kissed his with her red lips. In the stove the fire slumbered. What a delicious atmosphere this room had! She seated herself in the armchair in Enrico's place and read with curiosity the titles of the books scattered on the mahogany writing desk. They were the masterpieces of modern literature.

Here and there many sheets were to be seen covered with minute and elegant writing—his own writing. How readily she recognized the long sentences in which he had written his protestations of love. She glanced at a sheet which contained a few lines in the form of a note. There were three or four erasures. To whom could her Enrico write? She would find out in a minute. She read:

"Adored Amelia:

"The blessed hour is finally reached when I can whisper in your ears the most passionate words. My wife has no suspicion. Tomorrow, Friday, at 4 in the afternoon, I will meet you at the public gardens. I will be waiting under the third poplar tree to the left for you to come. Farewell now. For me eternity commences from today. It will finish tomorrow with your first kiss to your

"WHO KNOWS?"

Adriana had finished reading it the second time, but kept on reading, holding her breath, pale as a corpse, with her eyes fixed on the infernal note, which she crumpled in her rigid hands. Poor child! A spasmodic sob came from her throat. She threw herself on the sofa in a terrible fit of desperation. In her youthful mind, maddened with grief, she made the most dreadful resolutions, but this was the one that came uppermost:

To fly to her mother and weep, weep forever on her bosom until death should release her.

Suddenly she calmed herself. She read the horrid note attentively and let these words escape her:

"'Tomorrow, Friday, at 4 o'clock, poplar to the left' * * * but today is Friday * * * it is half past 3, but, then, there is barely time to go out and learn the worst of my torture * * * and fly."

The gray clouds sifted down the snow. Adriana walked along under its icy caress. She was fatigued. The gardens were far off. The people hastening by turned to look at her. She saw only the interminable street. Panting, wet with perspiration, covered with snow, she finally reached the gardens. She entered—the third poplar to the left was there. In front of the accursed tree a few bushes shivered in the wind. She hid behind one of them and waited with death in her heart.

Now the perspiration froze on her skin. The piercing cold made her shiver. The snow fell faster and faster, and soon the bare branches, the trunks, the few leaves and the street were covered with it, but Adriana did not notice the snow nor pay any heed to her weariness. Her beautiful blue eyes were fixed on the third poplar to the left, and she blessed the abundant snow and the furious wind which permitted her to be there, quite alone, at the downfall of her love.

Four o'clock sounded, but she saw no one. It commenced to grow dark. The electric lamps were already lighted, and under their bluish light the whiteness of the snow appeared like marble. Evening had come. The third poplar to the left, all covered with snow, waited in vain, like herself, braving, like her, the fury of the tempest. Adriana, benumbed, trembling, lonely, came out from her hiding place and turned to retrace her useless steps.

The maid hastened at the sound of the bell.

"Is it Signor Enrico?" asked Adriana anxiously.

"No, I met him on the stairs after the signora went out, and he came in again in a few moments."

"Adriana, Adriana, my love, where have you been in such weather?"

So saying, Enrico met her with open arms. He freed her from her mantle, heavy with snow, brushed her damp hat and led her lovingly toward the open fire.

She let him do so and looked around her. The dinner table was spread with the white damask tablecloth, the glittering glasses, the silver, the bouquet of sweet flowers, the bright lights—all this blessed paradise of love lost forever—this brought her desperation to a climax, and while Enrico, crouching at her feet, kissed her hands red with cold, she broke out into weeping.

Enrico rose with a bound.

"What has happened to you, my love? What grave disaster? Oh, speak, Adriana, do not let me suffer so!"

But Adriana could not speak. Sobs followed sobs, and her breast heaved spasmodically.

"For the love of God, Adriana!" burst forth Enrico, "For the love of God, speak, or I shall go mad!"

Enrico's tone was so heartrending, his words trembled so on the verge of weeping that Adriana looked at him for an instant and stammered in a broken voice:

"You do not any longer love me!"

Enrico calmed himself as if by magic. He regained control of himself, kneeled again at her feet and said with a caressing voice:

"And why do you say I do not love you any more?"

At this seeming show of hypocrisy Adriana felt her heart filled with disdain at thought of her lost calmness and love and happiness. She sprang up and drew away from him as from an impure object, looked at him with eyes full of tears, exclaiming, in a voice trembling with despair:

"Perhaps another woman than me—perhaps a woman whom you call your adored Amelia"—here her voice broke into a sob—"waited for you today in the garden at 4 o'clock under the third poplar to the left!"

A rippling laugh, shrill and irresistible, interrupted Adriana's words. Enrico laughed like a madman. He embraced her in spite of herself, drew her into his study, covering her with kisses and, pointing to the scattered pages still lying on his writing desk, said:

"But do you not see? Do you not see that this note belongs to a story that your Enrico is writing?"

Adriana looked at him with amazement. Her eyes filled with joy.

"How I have suffered!" she said in a trembling voice, in which a few sobs still remained, then sank exhausted on the sofa, covered with Enrico's kisses and caresses.—From the Italian For Short Stories.

### Selecting Cigars by Color.

One of the most absurd fads of the cigar trade is that of color in reference to havanas. The idea prevails that color is indicative of strength. It is no such thing. A light or medium colored cigar is not necessarily mild or medium in flavor, for the simple reason that the color refers to the outside wrapper only, which in itself is of very thin substance, and in quantity is of very small proportion to the other materials that make up the cigar. As a matter of fact, the fillers and bunch wrappers will determine the body or strength of the cigar. The actual strength or otherwise of the inner body of the cigar—viz, fillers and bunch wrappers—is too often an unknown quantity. It is quite true that a statement may be made that these parts are so-and-so or a mixture of this and that and give a certain ash, etc., but this explains nothing. Not only are there various grades of the same tobacco in relation to quality, but there are also a variety of grades that determine strength. With the exception that certain tobaccos have varying degrees of body or otherwise, a mild, medium or full cigar is largely a matter of chance. —London Grocer.

### His Idea of Scoring.

At a country cricket match in Lanarkshire a local farmer's boy was appointed scorer, his duties being carefully explained to him. The first inning was not very productive of runs and soon came to an end, and every one made a rush for the scorer. Judge of their surprise, however, when they found that not a single mark had been made in the carefully ruled book that had been provided.

When reproached in somewhat strong terms, the boy was not in the least disconcerted, but, with the most ingenuous air in the world, said:

"I was sae eenterested in the sport that I quite forgot to mak' the crosses. But it disna matter—that wee laddie wi' the red face is the smartest runner among ye."—London Tit-Bits.

### The Artist Monet.

Claude Monet, the impressionist artist, who lives in the picturesque village of Giverny, in Normandy, is now a wealthy man, but the house he has enlarged is quite like that of the surrounding peasants. White plaster, with a red tiled roof, narrow and low and long, for his family is large. Personally, he is an interesting looking man of about 60, strong and ragged, the type of a refined peasant. He wears the big, clumsy wooden sabots of the country, combined with the finest linen, with hemstitched ruffles at neck and wrists.