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THE HOUSE BELOW THE HILL.

MRS. S. M. B. PIATT.

You ask me of the farthest star,
Whither your thought can climb at will,
Forever-questioning child of mine.
I fear it is not half so far
As is the house below the hill,
Where one poor lamp begins to shine,
The lamp that is of death the sign.

Has it indeed been there for years,
In rain and snow, with ruined roof
For God to look through, day and night,
At man's despair and woman's tears,
While with myself I stood aloof,
As one by some enchanted right
Held high from any ghastly sight?
* * * * * *
One of my children lightly said,
"Oh, nothing (Why must we be still?)
Only the people have to cry
Because the woman's child is dead
There in the house below the hill.
I wish that we could see it fly,
It has gold wings, and that is why!"

Gold wings it *has?* I only know
What wasted little hands it had,
That reached to me for pity, but
Before I thought to give it—oh,
On earth's last rose-bud faint and sad,
Less cold than mine had been, they shut.
Sharper than steel, some things should cut!
* * * * * *
I thought the mother showed to me,
With something of a subtle scorn
(When morning mocked with bird and dew),
That brief and bitter courtesy
Which awes us in the lowliest born.
Ah, soul, to thine own self be true;
God's eyes, grown human, look thee through!

"We need no help—we needed it.
You have not come in time, and so
The women here did everything.
You did not know! You did not know!
I surely saw the dark brows knit,
To let the living die for bread,
The trailing fair shrouds to hide the dead!

What time I cried with Rachel's cry,
I wondered that I could not wring,
While sitting at the grave, forlorn,
Compassion from yon alien sky,
That knows not death nor anything
That troubles man of woman born,
Save that he wounded Christ with thorn.

My sorrow had the right to find
Immortal pity? I could sit
Not hearing at my very feet
The utter wailing of my kind,
And dream my dream high over it!
O human heart, what need to beat,
If nothing save your own is sweet?

Ah me, that fluttering flower and leaf,
That weird wan moon and pitiless sun,
And my own shadow in the grass,
Should bide me from this common grief!
Was I not dust? What had I done?
In that fixed face as in a glass
I saw myself to judgment pass!

—*Atlantic Monthly.*

WHAT HE THOUGHT.

A few days since, says a Michigan paper, a specimen of humanity, chuckfull of fashionable drink, took a seat in the express train at Jackson, and quietly waited the advent of the conductor, who appeared on time and relieved the traveler's hat of his ticket without any remarks. On his return the traveler button-holed him and inquired:

"Conductor, how far to Pleon?"

"Twenty miles."

"That's wot I tho't."

At the next station the traveler stopped him and again inquired:

"Conductor, how far is it to Manchester?"

"Twenty miles."

"That's wot I tho't."

At the next station the traveler stopped him the third time, and said:

"Conductor, how far to Tecumsy?"

"Twenty miles."

"That's wot I tho't."

"As the train left Tecumsy, the traveler exhausted the patience of the conductor, and the following dialogue explains the result.

"Conductor, how far to Adri'n?"

The conductor threw himself upon his dignity, and remarked:

"See here, my friend, do you take me for a fool?"

"That's wot I tho't."

The conductor joined the passengers in a hearty laugh, and concluded to allow his questioner to "tho't" as he pleased.

☞ Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity the heat of his own fire has sadness in it. Then there is a kind of contempt of the landscape by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.—*Emerson.*

☞ The large consumption of spirits in Sweden is proved by the fact that, with a population of only about 4,000,000, the revenue derives nearly 14,000,000 crowns from the tax on homemade spirits. Denmark, with a population of about 2,000,000, only derives about 4,000,000.

THE LOST POCKET BOOK;
OR,
THE FINDER'S REWARD!

BY J. B. N. BERRY.

[*Written Especially for the Baltimorean.*]

Was it all a dream?
Methought, ere this, herself would press that chair,
Seated before me, while her sunny hair,
Her eyes, that like stars at midnight beam,
Would life-like on my radiant canvas gleam,
And make a portraiture beyond compare.
How could I fail, when Love would aid me there?

* * * * * Why should I try
Pencil or chisel, when I needs must err?
In memory alone your moulds lie,
And memory now is but one dream of her.

* * * * * * * * * *
Thus man pursues his weary calling,
And wrings the hard life from the sky,
While happiness unseen is falling
Down from God's bosom silently.

—*Schiller.*

"Wake up, old fellow! You have been napping for the past half hour.—What's the matter, ha? Ain't in love?" rapidly exclaimed and interrogated Ned Gordon, at the same time giving his auditor a vigorous slap on the back.

"Since you have asked me that question, Ned, the thoughts I have been entertaining for the past half hour, seem to have been stimulated by some such subtle power as love," laughingly replied Malcolm Crafton.

"Mal, the girl who could induce you to give her thirty minutes of your undivided thoughts, must be a very Psyche. Tell me all about it, old fellow—who is she? What's her name?" jocosely asked Ned, at the same time drawing a chair alongside of Malcolm Crafton's, elevating his feet to the rounds of another chair; turning his head and quizzically looking into Malcolm's face. At the same time a smile played over his features, with fitful rapidity, reminding one of the swiftly succeeding flashes of summer lightning, which serves to light up, with peculiar vividness, the otherwise surrounding darkness.

Ned Gordon and Malcolm Crafton were seated at the bay-window of the Allston, and to the casual promenader of Charles street, would be thought to be there for the twofold purpose of seeing and being seen by the beauty and fashion usually thronging this fashionable promenade.

Of all the members of this fashionable Club, Malcolm Crafton at least, was the one about whom such a remark could not be truthfully made, for he rarely visited the Club during the hours that fashion had fixed for the fair ones to take their daily exercise, his business claiming his constant thought, and to it he gave the closest attention. He had made the maintaining of the firm-name, as established by his father, his greatest ambition; and even during his younger days he evinced a talent and an application for the business, which were remarkable. The "Germans," "Kettle Drums,' parties and other fashionable amusements knew him not. He refused all the polite invitations that for a time had been sent him, until at length he was considered a woman-hater, and treated accordingly by the gentle sex.

The girls knew that their smiles would be wasted on Malcolm Crafton, and took little trouble to dissemble whenever they passed him on the street, but displayed their "who-cares-for-you" looks to the fullest degree permissible.

Malcolm Crafton rarely ever loafted at the Club during the day, usually going there after business hours to read the papers, discuss the news of the day, or take a social hand at whist or chess. It was very unusual for him to be there at the hour Ned Gordon found him in pensive abstractedness, and it was more unusually to find him immersed in thought, for Malcolm usually left business at his counting room—never thinking of the day's affair after he had departed from his store. It was so unusual a sight, that Ned Gordon was somewhat surprised, and knowing Malcolm very intimately, could not imagine anything more likely to make him wear such a serious expression, than imagining himself in love.

When Malcolm stated that the thoughts he was entertaining at the time of his interruption, must have been prompted by some such subtle power as love, Ned became more desirous of possessing the fullest particulars about anything so new and unexpected, and was a little impatient that Malcolm did not at once confide in him.

"Well, old fellow, tell me all about it—*sub rosa*. I don't mean for you to confide any secret, but it must be an awkward position for you to find yourself in. I won't tell the boys, you know. They might laugh, and—. You don't like to be laughed at, do you? Who's the fair one that has found an entrance into that well sealed heart of yours? Do I know her? (Ned Gordon knew all the fair ones of the *beau monde*, and he thought he must know Malcolm's inamorata.) Oh, dog it, tell a fellow, won't you? You sit there like a phinx, whilst I am aflame with a desire to know something of this strange occurrence," said Ned Gordon, endeavoring to impart a serious expression to his curiosity.

"Well, Ned, I was just thinking of the strange feelings which were thrusting themselves over me in spite of myself; trying to analyze the cause of their springing into existence and holding possession of my mind, whom I know so little of the object upon which these thoughts were dwelling," replied Malcolm.

"Malcolm, your meditation has made you too profound for me to comprehend. Can't you come down a little and less pedanic?" Ned interrupted.

"You asked me whether I was in love, no doubt thinking this a foolish question, and I should have thought so too, if I had not been trying to account for the reason of my thoughts turning to one object constantly, like the needle of the compass—love being the powerful magnet in my case."

"How so, Mal?" seriously enquired Ned.

"Well, it's a story that will require some time to relate, but as you seem so much interested, I will tell it to you," answered Malcolm.

"Go on; if it takes all night, I will listen."

"Some six weeks since I found a pocket book, containing a small amount of money, a gold pencil, and a check drawn by a gentleman named Randolph, on a bank in Richmond, Va, to the order of a Miss Addie Randolph. I waited several days, expecting it to be advertised, but finding that it was not, wrote to the drawer of the check. After some two weeks the letter was returned to me endorsed, 'Not called for.' I them addressed a letter to the bank, requesting the Cashier to notify Mr. Randolph of the facts I have here related to you, and also to place himself in communication with me.

"In a day or so I received a letter from the gentleman, who lives in the suburbs of Richmond, to the effect that the pocket-book was lost by his daughter, who was then on a visit to a friend in Baltimore county, and that he would request her to write to me, giving a full description of the contents.

"The next day I received a note, the chirography of which, as well as the composition, plainly told that it had been written by a lady of culture.

"There was something about the letter—the few simple words being so placed as to express the refinement and culture of the writer—that I instantly conceived a desire to know the author, imagining her to be young, pretty, sensible and aristocratic.

"I sent the pocket-book, and to-day received her acknowledgement of its receipt, which has made the impression created by her first letter more indelible. I have been thinking of her all day; picturing her in my mind; conceiving her to be my *beau ideal* of a lovely woman, and persuading myself that the hand of destiny is gradually drawing us to one another. I feel an insatiable desire to be acquainted with her, but no plan that I can conceive of will bring about the desired result, except to write to her, requesting the pleasure of calling upon her, for the purpose of forming an acquaintance, which I know is perfectly foolish. Don't you think so, Ned?" enquired Malcolm.

"Yes," replied Ned, "especially if she would refuse. But if destiny is shaping this matter, why don't you wait?" he enquired.

"I will make a virtue of necessity, and wait on destiny, Ned," replied Malcolm, "but mind, no joking with me about this. I told you in confidence, because it was a strange fantasy, and unusually for me to think of such things, besides there was nothing else to talk about, and I gave you the benefit of the latest news."

For many days afterwards Malcolm continued to think of the lady who had addressed him the letter, endowing her with all the virtues and attributes of an ideal character, the mental infatuation so pervading him as to render his heart susceptible—if the lady, upon a personal acquaintance, should realize his expectation. He had almost been tempted to write to her, introducing himself, and requesting the privilege of corresponding with her, but being an entire stranger, prudence suggested that this would not be altogether proper.

He had with some effort succeeded in diverting his thoughts into another channel, considering it perfectly useless to entertain any hope of ever meeting her, until one day, whilst at the Mt. Vernon, he espied her name, as also that of Mr. Randolph, on the register. He at once determined to send his card to Mr. and Miss Randolph, so calling a waiter, he bade him present his compliments and to say that he awaited them in the parlor.—He occupied the inverval in endeavoring to shake off the nervous anxiety he found himself in, but before his usual calmness was restored, he heard the rustling of silk a soft footfall upon the carpet, saw the door open, and Miss Randolph stood before him.

Malcolm's eyes surveyed her at a glance noting the contour of her face, the graceful outlines of her form, the *tout ensemble* of her appearance, and confessed to himself that in every detail his preconceived notions had been correct. Her carriage had that nameless grace which is not unfrequently positive evidence of the beauty of the face; her mein was of that marked distinction which so much pleases the fastidiousness of the man of refinement; and lastly her hair was of a flaxen golden texture and color, and worn in the prevailing mode, which perhaps was not the least attraction, for it correspondended with his ideal, and made her look more harmonious, more youthful and more virginal in expression.

As Malcolm arose and introduced himself, his eyes flashed upon her beauty, his eager gaze caused the blushes to suffuse neck, cheek and brow, which added transcendant loveliness to a faultless complexion. Her voice, as she replied to his few words of greeting, caused his heart to palpitate with a nervous pleasure, which nearly brought him to her feet.

"Miss Randolph," spoke Malcolm, 'seeing your name on the register, I embraced the opportunity of introducing myself. If this be a liberty that does not share approval, I beg your pardon for my intrusion. The fact is, I have not been unable to prevent my mind dwelling upon the incidents of the lost pocket book, and forming a picture of yourself; and I must confess that curiosity to see the real exponent of my ideal, was a slight ingredient in the desire to form your acquaintance. Without egotism, Miss Randolph; indeed with propriety, I may say, that my family occupy a leading position in society, and that I am a gentleman. This much at least it is proper for you to know, since the acquaintance is offered by myself."

"Mr. Crafton, I am pleased to make your acquaintance, especially to thank you personally for the trouble you had in restoring the pocket book; not for the intrinsic value of the book, but for the gold pencil—a memento of love from my mother, which is very, very dear to me. I have made some enquiry regarding you, and learn that you are a gentleman, whose acquaintance any lady could accept."

"I enquired for your father, and had hoped that he would have afforded me the pleasure of making his acquaintance," remarked Malcolm.

"My father has some matters in the city which will require his attention during business hours. He will be pleased to meet you, I am sure—to make your acquaintance, as well as to thank you for your kindness," answered Miss Randolph.

"How long will you remain in the city, Miss Randolph?"

"We leave to morrow for home; that is, if my father succeeds in finishing the business which has caused him to stop in Baltimore on his way home."

The conversation glided pleasantly on for half an hour. Each world, look and graceful movement but added to the feeling he had permitted himself to consider, until a desire seized him, that he would like to share her companionship, and minister to her comforts and pleasures forever.

"I had hoped, Miss Randolph, to have met your father, and to have obtained his permission to escort you to Ford's Grand Opera House to-night. With your consent I will call this evening to request that you and your father accept seats in my private box. Miss Neilson will appear as "Juliet." Have you ever seen this actress?"

"No," replied Miss Randolph.

"You have no prior engagement, I hope."

"None!" the lips slightly parting to utter the monosyllable, which was embellished with a graceful movement of the head and a glance from the brightest of eyes, which only a handsome and cultured woman knew how to give, to render the simplest and most inharmonious word seem most euphonious.

When Malcolm returned to the hotel the same evening, for the purpose of escorting Mr. and Miss Randolph to the Opera House, he was presented to Mr. Randolph, whom he found to be an agreeable and well informed gentleman, of the most unexceptional and pleasing manner.

Mr. Randolph was soon joined by Miss Randolph.

"My father has a prior engagement, Mr. Crrfton, and will be unable to avail himself of your kind offer,' remarked Miss Randolph.

"Yes, you must excuse me, Mr. Crafton. I regret that I will not have the opportunity of witnessing Miss Nielson in her celebrated impersonation of "Juliet," as well as inspecting Ford's Grand Opera House; but I wish to finish the business which caused me to stop in Baltimore, so as to return home to-morrow. I will be pleased to see you at my farm, near Richmond, Va., Mr. Crafton, and hope that you will give us an opportunity of becoming better acquainted."

"Thanks! It will give me much pleasure to be received as a friend, and I promise, if ever I should visit Richmond, to call. If Miss Randolph will permit me to escort her, I would be glad if you give me your consent for her to accompany me to the Grand Opera House to-night."

He spoke his regrets that the father could not accompany them, and was soon on the way to Ford's, with Miss Randolph upon his arm.

The acting, the audience, the magnificent temple of the Muses, and beyond all, the new made acquaintance, placed Miss Randolph in the best of spirits. She felt for the nonce that she could wish her life ever thus. The stiff formalities of a new acquaintanceship gradually gave place to the easy sociability of accepted friendship. There was an intelligent appreciation of the sentiments expressed by Malcolm, and at the same time her rejoinders were made with such purity of diction and occasional flashes of wit, that it was pleasure enjoyed with a zest, which was a new experience to him.

That night, as their hands met and the parting words were about to follow, Malcolm could not resist the desire to see Miss Randolph once more before bidding her a final adieu. It was a moment or so before he could determine whether it were best to ask the privilege of calling in the morning to speak the parting words, or whether he should bid her good night and good bye now; but, like nine tenths of poor humanity, he yielded to his desires, and asked the privilege of calling again in the morning.

"I won't bid you good bye now, Miss Randolph, if you will grant me permission to do so on the morrow. We seldom have the courage to face unpleasant duties but try to temper them by procrastinating as long as possible."

"If it will be a pleasure for you to call, I will be very glad to see you; especially well pleased to make—even though in a feeble manner—some return for the many kindnesses I have already experienced at your hands. I have no business matters to occupy my time, and will be pleased to share the moments, that will otherwise hang heavily on my hands, in conversation with you."

He went his way home, possessed of a haunting desire He was thoroughly in love: the tender passion was in full possession of his thoughts, and clothed them with a glamour that concealed all her imperfections, and made prominent and pleasing all the atributes of character which had from the first so favorably impressed him.

He became impatient for the hour to arrive that he might see her again, feeling a decided preference for her society

In the morning he endeavored to present as calm an exterior as usual, but the consuming passion had exerted its influence, and stamped its effect upon features, actions and manners.

The time at length arrived when he could present himself at the hotel, and he hurried on with as much anxiety depicted in his face and movements as if the most momentous consequences depended upon his haste.

Amused at his impetuosity, as well as convinced by his sudden departure from a well-settled habit of taking things quietly that he had diagnosed his case correctly when he confessed to his enquiring thoughts that he was in love, he vainly endeavored to regain his composure in the interval between his announcement and Miss Randolph's appearance in the parlor.

Malcolm could not convince himself, even if others could not detect it, for, struggle as he would, he felt an irresistible desire to tell her how much he had learned to love her; nor was it long before he began to drift towards the point where he would have he opportunity of telling her his love, if he discovered that it would be acceptable to her.

"Do you know that I was constantly thinking of you after I had received your first letter? Then it was I began to picture to myself the kind of woman you were, both as regards your personal appearance and disposition," remarked Malcolm.

"I hope you are not too much disappointed, Mr. Crafton; but I fear that you imagine me to be in accordance with your ideal woman, and that you have found me jejune in comparison," laughingly remarked Miss Randolph.

"I did endow you with the character of my ideal; in other words, I seemed to have an inspiration of what you were like, and formed my ideal by that standard. Strange to say, you are the counterpart, or, more properly speaking, the original of that vision. I am not disappointed; but, on the contrary, so much pleased, that the ideal image has indelibly graven itself upon my heart, and it will never be erased. Addie, I must tell you that I love you, that I have learned the meaning of that word, which I only knew as the empty symbol of a weakness until you taught me its ennobling power."

The heaving bosom, down-cast eyes and blush-suffused face told plainly that Addie, too, was entrapped in the meshes of love. Maiden modesty prevented her from speaking her thoughts as freely as she desired, and the brevity of the acquaintance was an additional cause for her hesitancy; not but what she knew that in point of wealth and station Malcolm Crafton would be an acceptable suitor for any lady, nor that his character and disposition caused her any doubt, for she was a shrewd judge of human character, and believed Malcolm to be actuated by the purest principles of true affection for her. She felt sure that her heart never went out so entirely at the bidding of any other man as it did to the appeal of Malcolm, and in spite of her surprise at the unexpected proposal, she believed most implicitly in the honor of her new friend.

Malcolm waited for some encouragement; some word that would tell him that he had not cast his first love upon an unappreciative being; that the new life that had been awakened in him was not to be smothered by an unrequited affection.

"Oh, Addie, give me your answer! I know that I have been precipitate; that I am too much a stranger to expect that you could know me and learn to love me in so short a time; but tell me if there is any hope of my future happiness, or whether I have spoken words which will blight the first bud of love that has ever blossomed from my heart," earnestly besought Malcolm.

"You have taken me by surprise. I did not anticipate that any such happiness was in store for me. You have taught me how to love truly and sincerely, for my heart has been yours since first we met."

The bond thus made was sealed with a kiss, and the lovers soon parted to calm their fluttering hearts and dwell in rapture over their new-found joy.

* * * * * * * * *

The affair had been kept a profound secret. Malcolm's friends had not the faintest idea of his attachment. His correspondence with Addie Randolph and his visits to her home near Richmond were not known.

Some six months after the period of the opening of our story the *elite* of Mt. Vernon Place and *habitues* of the Allston were surprised at the reception of cards of invitation to the marriage ceremony of Mr. Malcolm Crafton, of Baltimore, and Miss Addie Randolph, of Henrico county, Virginia. The affair was a nine day's wonder; the slyness, as the girls called it, of that woman-hater, as Malcolm was termed by them, was a surprise that piqued them, because their penetration was at fault, and their charms had availed them nothing.

The wedding was duly celebrated, an opportunity offered the acquaintance and friends to pay their compliments to the bride and groom, cards of invitation having been sent to Malcolm's friends to a reception and dinner given at his residence in honor of his bride, after which a short tour of Europe was the programme.

The "Lost Pocket-Book; or, The Finder's Reward," as hastily sketched here, will serve as an illustration of what I have always considered an aphorism—that "accidents are sometimes the forerunners of fortune."

Baltimore, January, 1877.

BREAD-BAKING;
AND THE THREE WARNINGS.

It was in the days of our grandmothers, when there were brick ovens in the land, that Mr. Hubbard bought his house; and bought it very much against his wife's will. It was a lonely house, and reported to be haunted. It was next to a graveyard, which, though unused, was not cheerful, and which had likewise the reputation of a ghost. However, Mr. Hubbard did not believe in ghosts, and was too cheerful to be depressed by warnings, and never intended to be lonely.

"Mrs. Hubbard," he said, when his wife shook her head over the purchase, "I got it cheap, and it is a good one. You will like it when you get there. If you don't why then talk."

So the house was bought, and into it the Hubbard family went. There was scarcely a chance for a ghost to show his face amid such a family of boys and girls. Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard counted ten of them, all noisy ones.

Having once expostulated and spoken out her mind as to the house, Mrs. Hubbard gave up the point. She scrubbed and scoured, tacked down carpets and put up curtains, and owned the place was pretty. As not a ghost appeared for a week, she made up her mind that there were no such inhabitants, she even began not to mind the tombstones. So the house got to rights at last, and baking day came about. In the press of business, they had a great deal of baker's bread, and were tired of it.

Mrs. Hubbard never enjoyed setting a batch of bread to rise as she did that which was to be eaten for the first time in the new house. "For I cannot get up an appetite for stuff that nobody knows who has had the making of," said Mrs. Hubbard, "and all puffy and alumy besides."

So into the oven went the bread, and out it came at the proper time, even and brown and beautiful as loaves could be. Mrs. Hubbard turned them up on their sides as she drew them forth, and they stood in the long bread-tray glorious proofs of her skill and the excellence of the oven, when Tommy Hubbard bounded in. Tommy was four; and when at that age we are prone to believe that anything will bear our weight. Tommy, therefore, anxious to inspect the newly-made bread, swung himself off his feet by clutching the edge of the bread tray, and over it came, loaves and Tommy and all.

Mrs. Hubbard flew to the rescue and picked up the loaves. All were dusted and put in the tray again but one. That lay bottom upward under the table.

"A bothering child, to give me so much trouble!" she said, as she crawled under the table to get it. "O—Ah—dear, dear, dear—O—O my——"

And there on the floor sat Mrs. Hubbard, screaming, wringing her hands and shaking her head. The children screamed in concert. Mr. Hubbard rushed in from the garden where he was at work.

"What's the matter, mother?" he gasped. Mrs. Hubbard pointed to the bottom of the loaf lying in her lap.

"Look there and see!" she said. It is a warning. William, I am going to be taken from them all."

And he looked; and he saw a death's-head and cross-bones, as plainly engraved as they possibly could be.

"It is accident," said Mr. Hubbard. "Such queer cranks do come, you know."

But Mrs. Hubbard was in a troubled state of mind, as was but natural. "The stories about the haunted house were true," she said; "and the spirits have marked the loaf. I am afraid its a warning." And the loaf was put aside, for even Mr. Hubbard did not dare to eat any of it.

Mrs. Hubbard got over her fright at last, but the news of the awfully-marked loaf spread through R——, and the people came to Mr. Hubbard's all the week to look at it. It was a death's-head and cross-bones certainly; every one saw that at a glance, but as to its meaning, people differed. Some believed that it was a warning of approaching death; some thought that the spirits wanted to frighten the Hubbards away, and get possession of the house again, all to themselves. This latter supposition inspired Mrs. Hubbard with courage; finally, being a brave woman, she adopted the belief, and when another baking day arrived, put her loaves into the oven once more, prepared for cross-bones, and not to be frightened by them. The loaves baked as before. They came out brown and crusty as Mrs. Hubbard turned each in her hands. There were no cross-bones visible, but on the last were sundry characters or letters. What, no one could tell, until there dropped in for a chat a certain printer of the neighborhood, accustomed to reading things backward.

"By George," said he, "that is curious, that *is* curious—r-e-s-u-r-g-a-m—resurgam; that is what is on the loaf—resurgam."

"Well, yes," said Mr. Hubbard, being obliged to admit it. "But it is not so bad as cross-bones and skull."

Mrs. Hubbard shook her head. "It's even solemner," said the little woman, who was not as good a linguist as a bread maker. "I feel confident, William, that I shall soon be resurgamed, and what will these dear children do then?"

And now that the second loaf was before her eyes, marked even more awfully than the first, Mrs. Hubbard grew really pale and thin, and lost her cheerfulness. "I have a presentment," she went over and over again, "that the third baking will decide who the warning belongs to. I believe it is meant for me, and time will show. Don't you see how thin I am growing?"

And though Mr. Hubbard laughed, he also began to be troubled. The third baking day was one of gloom. Solemnly as at a funeral, the family assembled to assist in the drawing. Five loaves came out markless; but one remained.

Mrs. Hubbard's hand trembled; but she drew it forth; she laid it on the tray; she turned it softly about. At last she exposed the lower surface. On it were letters printed backward, plain enough to read this time, and arranged thus:

"Died April 2d,
lamented by
her large family."

"It is me," cried Mrs. Hubbard. "I am to go to-morrow. This is the 1st. I do feel faint. Yes, I do. It is awful, and so sudden." And Mrs. Hubbard fainted away in the arms of the most terrified of men and husbands.

The children creamed, the cat mewed, the dog barked. The oldest boy ran for the doctor. People flocked to the Hubbard's. The loaf was examined. Yes, there was Mrs. Hubbard's warning—her call to quit this world.

She lay in her bed, bidding good-bye to her family and friends, her strength going fast. She read her Bible, and tried not to grieve too much. The doctor shook his head. The clergyman prayed with her. Nobody doubted that her end was at hand, for people were very superstitious in those days.

They had been up all night with good Mrs. Hubbard, and dawn was breaking, and with it she was sure that she must go; when, clattering over the road and up to the door came a horse, and on the horse came a man, who alighted. He rattled the knocker and rushed in. There was no stopping him. Up the stairs he went to Mrs. Hubbard's room and bolted into it. Every one stared at him as he took off his hat.

"Parding," said he, breathlessly, "I heard Mrs. Hubbard was a-dying—and she'd warnings on her baking. I came over to explain. You see I was sexton of the church here a few years ago, and I know all about it. You needn't die of fear just yet, Mrs. Hubbard, for it is neither spirits nor devils about; nor yet warnin's. What marks the loaves is old Mrs. Finkle's tombstone. I took it for an oven-bottom, seeing there were no survivors, and bricks were dear. The last folks before you didn't have them printed off on their loaves, because they used tins; and we got used to the marks ourselves. Cross-bones and skulls we put up with, and never thought of caring for the resurgam. So you see how it is, and I'm sorry you've been scared."

Nobody said a word. The minister shut his book. The doctor walked to the window. There was a deadly silence. Mrs. Hubbard sat up in bed.

"William!" said she to her husband, "the first thing you do, get a new bottom to that oven." And the tone assured the assemblage of anxious friends that Mrs. Hubbard was not going to die just yet.

Indeed, she came down the very next day. And when the oven had been reconstructed, the first thing she did was to give invitations for a large tea-drinking. On which occasion the loaves came out right.

☞ It is estimated that over twenty million young forest trees were planted in this country during the past year.

☞ An old castle in Japan has recently been turned into a shoe factory.

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