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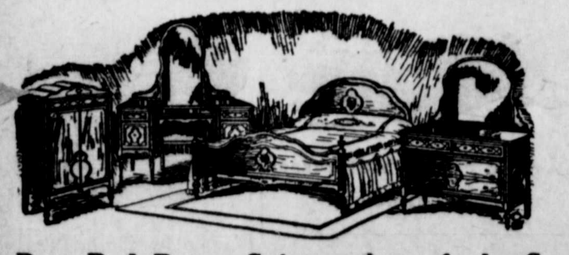

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A LATE AUTUMN ROSE

(© by D. J. Walsh.)

AS CASSY BARTLETT turned from the street to enter the house she heard a swift fall of steps behind her and a panting voice:

"Wait, Cassy! I want to see you!"

It was Elly Marsh, who doubtless had seen Cassy passing by, had thrown a shawl over her head and run out to intercept her.

"I was watching for you and called to you," Elly said, "but I guess you didn't hear. I've got something for you. There!" She pressed a small package into Cassy's hand. Then in answer to Cassy's astonished look, she added: "You know what it's for, don't you? Your birthday."

"Oh, yes! This is my birthday, isn't it? Do you know I couldn't think for a minute. How good of you to remember it, Elly! And thanks for the gift. You always are such a darling, Elly. If—if we weren't standing here in the street with Miss Piper watching us from her kitchen window, I should certainly kiss you."

"It isn't anything of great value, only a remembrance," Elly said. "And now I must run or my potatoes will burn."

She was gone, and Cassy went on into the house. A smell of turnip met her in the hall. Upstairs she could hear Miss Frost and Miss Marx, two other boarders who had got home ahead of her, talking through open doors as they prinked for lunch. There was no one in the sitting room, and Cassy went in there to open her package. Her birthday! She had forgotton all about it; her thirty-sixth birthday! She almost wished Elly had not remembered it. What had Elly given her? What could any one give her that could brighten the fact of her being thirty-six, alone and obliged to work hard for her living?

Without expectation or thrill Cassy opened the little package and found a delicately hand-made handkerchief wrapped about something thin and hard. A card? No, a picture—a photograph of herself. Now, where had Elly got hold of that, and what did she mean? Cassy turned the photograph over and found that Elly had scribbled on the back: "This is the way you looked at twenty. Compare it with the way you look now, and be thankful for your thirty-sixth birthday!"

A smile twitched at Cassy's lips as she gazed at the little picture which recalled to her an almost forgotten self at twenty. Hair dragged back from a forehead into a high pompadour, built up over a scratchy jute pad, exposed ears, collar straining her neck, huge sleeves—how funny! And her face was long—she had been thin at twenty. "Looks as if I could have eaten oats out of a churn, as grandmother used to say," she commented with amusement. And yet, too, she felt a curious bit of sympathy for the girl with the pompadour who had been herself sixteen years ago. What a fool the girl had been, to think that Enoch Morrow could care for her! She could understand now, looking at the little photograph, why he hadn't; why he had married Alice Stimpson and gone away into a life unknown of the Castle Creekers.

The lunch bell was jangling, and Cassy, tucking the picture away inside her blouse, went into the dining room. About the huge square table gathered seven people besides Cassy. Mrs. Higby sat at the head, Mr. Higby at the foot, and on either side were ranged the boarders. Cassy sat between Mrs. Pike and Mr. Horton, who was staying there while his wife made her annual visit to her old home.

"I shan't be here after today, folks," Mr. Horton announced. "Got a letter from Molly this morning and she says she will be home tonight."

"Sorry to lose you, I'm sure," said Mrs. Pike in her stiff way.

"Sorry to go," rejoined Mr. Horton. And as Jenny just then came in with the roast, conversation subsided for some minutes.

Cassy hurried through lunch in order to have a moment at Elly Marsh's before she had to return to the office. And Elly, taking her by the shoulders, marched her up to the big mirror, triumphantly.

"Now that you have seen the way you looked at twenty, I want you to see how you look now," she said.

Cassy looked, rather shyly. She saw a woman who appeared younger than she was, a woman charmingly plump and rosy, who had an air of well-being and style. The memory of the little photograph was still with her and she smiled.

"Well—I certainly weigh more," she admitted.

"I should say so! You were skin and bones when that picture was taken—grieving yourself to death over Enoch Morrow. Now you don't look as if you had ever had a physical or mental pain in your life. Talk about late blooming! You are an autumn rose all right."

"Oh, Elly! You flatterer." But Cassy kissed her and went on her way, happier than she had been in months. Life wasn't altogether bad, although you were thirty-six, had seen home and fortune evaporate, and had been forced to earn your own living.

"If I am as good looking as that, I need a new hat," Cassy thought on her way home from work that afternoon. She had paused to glance into the window of that smart little shop known as "The Mary Louise." There was just the hat she wanted, agreeably marked down, too! Why should she not get it? "I will," she decided. "That last rainstorm I was caught out in nearly finished this one."

Twenty minutes later Cassy came out of "The Mary Louise" wearing the little new hat with its bright ornament and the clever twist to the brim, which showed the waves of dark hair above her left ear.

As she entered the Higby house, a smell of soup met her, adding itself to that earlier odor of turnip, which still lingered. This was her first impression. Her next was of a man who was kicking off his rubbers at the hall rack, with his back turned to her. He was tall, heavily built with gray hair, a little thin at the top. A new boarder, in Mr. Horton's place! Mrs. Higby never had to wait to fill her vacancies.

As Cassy approached the hall rack the man turned and she found herself standing face to face with Enoch Morrow.

There was the slightest pause, during which she realized that he did not know her, then she spoke as casually as she could:

"Why, how do you do, Enoch? Have you forgotten Cassy Bartlett?"

"Cassy Bartlett! It can't be possible!" He held out his hand.

They had time for but the briefest handshake before the dinner bell went jangling. At the table he had Mr. Horton's place. Cassy sat next to him.

Mrs. Pike, always inquisitive, found out a great many things about Enoch Morrow before the meal was over. His wife was dead, he was alone, and he had come back to Castle Creek to sell some land he had been holding on to in order to get a higher price. Every one he knew had gone or changed about and he felt himself very fortunate to be able to find a place at Mrs. Higby's. He had his own car and was thinking of driving it clear through to California, where he intended to spend the winter. He had been working pretty hard and needed a rest.

Cassy, hearing these things, sat very quiet and tried to eat her dinner, but she was aware that Enoch looked at her often in a puzzled, wondering way.

Afterward, in the sitting room he made her sit down and talk to him.

"You don't know how pleasant it seems to find you, Cassy," he said. "All the old crowd has drifted away. Sixteen years is a long time to be away."

Then he told her how Alice had had pneumonia the previous winter and had died. There were no children—"only a dog, and I have given him away. I could get him back though, if—if I had a home to take him to. But I have only a house, a big one, and a man makes pretty poor work of living alone, don't you know it?"

Three weeks later Elly made Cassy another present. This time it was a wedding present.

Grewsome Objects in Room of Archeologist

No more fearful and wonderful objects exist than those astounding turquoise skulls, some of which I saw in Mexico, which are real human skulls solidly paved with turquoise chiefly, than obsidian and other stones.

And that reminds me of one of the most amazing men I ever knew—Eugene Boban, who did more than any other one man to show us the wonders of Mexico.

Skulls are dreary things at the best, even if studded with gems, but to Boban, so saturated in archeology that I have no doubt he thought, when he saw a pretty woman, what a beautiful skeleton she would one day make—to Boban a skull was merely an interesting ornament for a room.

I shall never forget my first visit to his home, where I went to see a wonderful sacred painting depicting gems, the marriage of Joseph and Mary, in life size, which he had unearthed for me from an ancient Mexican church.

Boban's room! A tiny cot placed between two mummified women which he had dug out of the walls of that same church, and at the foot of this bed, that he might, on retiring and rising, contemplate its never-ending archeological wonders, the head of a man, which, during burial, had been transformed into adipocere, a sort of natural hard soap.—Dr. George Kunz in the Saturday Evening Post.

Tactful Answer

A taxi driver picked up a fare who appeared to be slightly unsteady on his feet. He asked to be driven "to the end of the rainbow."

The taxi driver humored the man, and off they went, but suddenly he began to wonder whether his fare had sufficient money to pay. He pulled up and opened the door.

"Here you are, sir!" he cried cheerfully.

"Is this the end of the rainbow?" asked the fare. "I can't see it anywhere."

"Well, we aren't quite there," agreed the taxi driver. "The end is just a few yards up the road, but the street's up, and you'll have to walk the rest."—London Answers.

Newfoundland Airport

So many planes have visited or passed over Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, in their trans-Atlantic or coastal hops that an airport has been established to facilitate refueling and repairs. It is situated on a hill and is visible for 30 miles. A runway has been built and hangars and lights will be provided later.

Poetic Justice

"Arabs dearly love what we call poetic justice," said Lowell Thomas, the writer-lecturer. "They tell the story of an Arab who stole a horse and sent his son to market to sell it. On the way to market, the son was himself robbed of the horse and forced to return to his father empty handed.

"'Ah!' exclaimed the old man when his son walked back into camp. 'I see thou has sold the horse. How much did it bring.'

"'Father,' said the son disconsolately, 'it brought the same price for which thou thyself didst buy it?'"

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