

TITIA:

By Mrs. CLARA DARGAN MACLEAN

Written for the Yorkville Enquirer.

PART I.

A line of grey horizon, broken by a worm-fence which crawled across acres of red clay; some straggling dogberry bushes, shivering in the March wind; a mere apology for a house, set in a bare field, and some starveling chickens—the only sign of life—these objects came severally into view as Milton Weir climbed the hill, at the foot of which roared and tumbled a mountain stream.

"Horrible! Horrible!" he ejaculated. "How can human creatures live so!"

He halted. There was no reply; but as his voice broke the cold stillness, a woman appeared on the threshold of the cabin, and stood there without speaking.

"Good evening!" Weir cried out, loud and cheery. "I want to see Jim Ross. Is he at home?"

A shake of the tousled head was the only answer.

"Can you tell me when he will be?" I'm bound to see him, thought the woman.

The woman looked vacantly towards the dogberry bushes, and shook her head again.

"He must and he mustn't," she muttered in the tone of a somnambulist.

The visitor was impatient. He made a sound between a grunt and a snarl, and turned to go.

"Can't you give me any idea where I may find him?"

Again the vacant stare fixed itself on the spot where the straggly chickens were, but she uttered no word.

Just then a child's figure appeared as by magic. Weir never could tell whether she stood before him like a smoke-wreath, slender, fragile, tall and almost as unsubstantial. Pale straw-colored hair fell over her narrow shoulders, and the wan face showed a brighter hue. Her bare feet and legs were blue with cold; a faded homespun frock revealed the outline of an undeveloped form.

The engineer regarded her with interest. "Well, child, maybe you can tell me where your father is."

The girl replied by turning as abruptly as she had appeared, and walked down the path. Looking back after she had advanced a few steps, and perceiving that Weir had not followed, she said, "Come on."

Down the hill she led the way, as swiftly over rough stones and wide clay gullies as a gazelle on its native heights. Her companion kept up, his stalwart stride in ludicrous contrast to the gliding step beside him. To Ross did not linger at the store. He questioned her returned only monosyllables from which he could gather little, and not till they reached the broad country road which ran parallel to the river, where his prospecting tour for a factory site had ended, did Weir surmise their destination. He had passed "the store" only a short time before, and thro' the broken window heard high-pitched voices in excited argument.

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"Ain't you cold?" he asked.

The child turned about suddenly and looked him full in the face. The pupils of her eyes were distended till only a rim of dark violet was visible, and an expression of intense feeling lightened the thin, drawn features. "No," she replied, her lips folding tightly over the small teeth, "I'm hot."

A scarlet spot burnt on her cheek, and Weir could scarcely follow fast enough as she bounded forward and fairly fled up the dilapidated steps of the store.

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A listener might hear war in their words before he entered the dark, foul room. A fire in the rusty stove was almost out, but it was kept warm by propinquity and profanity.

A short, coarse looking man, evidently the proprietor, leaned upon the counter, and threw in a soothing word occasionally. The unusual sight of a stranger roused his business instincts.

"Move round, boys, and make room for the gentleman," he called out, coming forward with a broken chair.

"Have a seat, sir. Cold evening, ain't it? Take something to drink."

The engineer replied in a sharp negative, and turned to the group. "Where's Jim Ross? I want to speak to him."

A long, lean body, drooping nearly double upon empty goods box, shook itself, and rose with that innate courtesy, which seems to characterize a true southerner. He held out an unsteady hand and smiled in a maudlin way.

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"I'm not a drinking man," he said, shortly, for the benefit of the crowd. "I'm here on business. Come outside, Mr. Ross, and let's talk."

His abrupt, masterly manner had its effect. The man made a great effort, and slouched toward the door, the others making way for him respectfully.

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She glanced wistfully at the big, awe inspiring figure waiting near.

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nesday, and as he would take the train at once, should be here by the five o'clock express. It is now after six."

As she spoke, however, a light vehicle came round a bend of the road, and drove rapidly toward the mansion. A wave of faint pink passed over the girl's face, transforming it as sunlight a field of ripened grain. She spoke not, but clasped her hands and watched the approaching carriage.

Mrs. Manning was herself flushed and excited. Her only brother was coming home after an absence of many years abroad, engaged in perfecting the great scheme of his life—to induce emigration and bring in capital with which to build up the waste places of the desolated south. Before leaving, he had seen the fulfillment of one dream, the establishment of a factory at Glen Burnie, as the hamlet was called. The water-power located ten years before by him was employed in running a cotton gin factory in that part of the country. Hundreds of families had found food, shelter and better still, employment, in the busy whirl of innumerable spindles. There was a new zest in life. Fields long lying fallow, yielded rich harvest; orchards were weighted with the fruits of a pruned and cultivated growth. Everywhere peace and smiling plenty, and in the hearts of a patient people, a sense of great thankfulness.

As Milton Weir stepped now upon his native heath, he had the air of a genuine Macgregor—self-contained and self-reliant as of old, and with the same straightforward simplicity of manner. Time had not aged him. On the contrary, as is often the case in physques dominated by an ever youthful spirit, he had a clearer eye, a more direct aspect, and the shadow of an anxious, almost overbearing ambition, had passed away, leaving a broad brow as placid as a morning in ripe October and as full of promise.

The two waiting women clasped each, an outstretched hand and received a kiss upon glowing cheeks. "Thank God! It is good to be here once more," his voice resonant and hearty as of yore. Then looking from one to the other, he saw the pupils, deep purple as the heart of a Parma violet, expanding with intense feeling. The germ of the woman had been in the neglected child, circumstances—may a loving providence—had provided the conditions for its perfect development.

As on that memorable night, again a thrill, strange and unaccustomed, passed through the being of this man, who has been the instrument of deliverance.

But it was not now an emotion of painful pity; and when, a few days later, the two—self-constituted guardian and beloved protégée—stood together at the foot of the granite boulder, where a seemingly useless existence had passed into eternity, Milton Weir realized the truest happiness that can come to a sincere soul—duty done without a dream of reward.

Yet that reward had come. The heart of the child rested like a bird on its nest upon the power and probity of the man beside her that woful night when he found her by the dead body of her father. Swiftly retracing his steps, with a sense of irresistible foreboding, he had followed the pair on their homeward way. But he had come too late. Together they saw the last flutter of the paralyzed vital forces, and the moment that proclaimed the weeping girl an orphan, fixed the noblest purpose of a busy life.

The morning sun was now flooding the encircling hills with a radiant lake of gold-dust from the forges of the gods. An intoxicating perfume of rhododendrons and a subtler odor of wild grapes and bee-haunted clovers filled the air. There was a distant low of cattle and the tinkling of bells as they wandered in wide, lush pastures, feeding on juicy grasses. Sight, sound, smell, all were ineffably soothing and sweet.

But the child of the mountain hut, the loving and lovely daughter of a splendid home, kept in her faithful heart but one sense, in her mind but one memory—the man who had first showed kindness to her father, poor, neglected, despised, but never forgotten, Jim Ross. She had no thought or desire that was not filled and dominated by the presence beside her.

"Yes," she whispered, in answer to a question fraught with the destiny of those two lives, "Yes! Yes! Yes!"

THE END.

FORETOLD HIS FUTURE.

The Message Carl Schurz Received From Spirit Land.

An extraordinary experience with a medium is given in Carl Schurz's memoirs in McClure's.

After receiving what purported to be a message from Schiller, General Schurz asked that the spirit of Lincoln be summoned to tell why President Johnson had called Schurz to Washington.

The answer came, "He wants you to make an important journey for him." I asked where that journey would take me. Answer, "He will tell you tomorrow." I asked further whether I should undertake that journey. Answer, "Yes; do not fail." (I may add, by the way, that at that time I had not the slightest anticipation as to what President Johnson's intention was regarding me.)

"Having disposed of this matter, I asked whether the spirit of Lincoln had anything more to say to me. The answer came, 'Yes; you will be a senator of the United States.' This struck me as so fanciful that I could hardly suppress a laugh. But I asked further, 'From what state?' Answer, 'From Missouri.' This was more provokingly mysterious still, but there the conversation ceased.

"Hardly anything could have been more improbable at that time than that I should be a senator of the United States from the state of Missouri. My domicile was in Wisconsin, and I was then thinking of returning there. I had never thought of removing from Wisconsin to Missouri, and there was not the slightest prospect of my ever doing so."

But, for the sake of my narrative, two years later I was surprised by an entirely unexpected and unexpected business proposition which took me to St. Louis, and in January, 1889, the Missouri legislature elected me a senator of the United States. I then remembered the prophecy made to me at the spirit seance in the house of my friend Tielemann in Philadelphia.

Miscellaneous Reading.

DEEP FALL PLOWING.

Discussion About Important Matter By High Authority.

The following bulletin issued by the bureau of plant industry of the United States department of agriculture, deals in a comprehensive and authoritative way with a subject that is of tremendous interest and importance to those who seek to be informed on correct agricultural methods:

At the commencement of the Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration Work in the southern states it was found necessary to outline the fundamental principles of good farming and to insist that the tillers of the soil should become familiar with them and practice them as a first step in the betterment of farm life. We have previously stated these first principles, but possibly they should be more fully explained.

Preparation of the Seed Bed.

Prepare a deep and thoroughly pulverized seed bed, well drained; break in the fall to a depth of 8, 10 or 12 inches, according to the soil, with implements that will not bring too much of the subsoil to the surface. (The foregoing depths should be reached gradually.)

The presence of heat, air, and moisture is essential to chemical and germ action in the preparation of plant food in the soil. The depths to which these penetrate the soil depend upon the depth of the plowing, provided the soil is well drained. There is no use in plowing down into a subsoil full of water.

It has been proved beyond that the roots of plants penetrate the soil deeper and feed deeper in deeply plowed land. Thus, in general, it may be stated that when the soil is plowed 3 inches deep the plants have 3 inches of food; when plowed 6 inches deep, they have 6 inches of food, and when plowed 10 inches deep they have 10 inches of food. The fact that the bottom portions of the plowed land are not as rich in available plant food as the top portions shows the necessity of getting more air and heat down to them by deeper tillage.

The most essential condition for fertile soil is a constant supply of moisture, so that a film of water can envelop the soil particles and absorb nutritive elements. The hair roots of plants drink this for nourishment. If there is any more than enough to serve as films for the soil particles and capillary water, there is too much and it should be removed. If the soil is too dry, it should be digged a hole 20 inches deep. If there is standing water in the bottom of the hole, it indicates too much water in the soil or subsoil.

The capacity of a given soil to hold film and capillary moisture depends upon how finely it is pulverized and upon the amount of humus in it. Unplowed lands retain but little water. Thoroughly pulverized soil 3 inches deep can not store enough to make a crop.

In all southern states there are every year periods of drought, sometimes not serious, but generally, sufficiently protracted to reduce the crop. The remedy for this is increased storage capacity for moisture. This can be accomplished by deep and thorough tillage and by filling the soil with humus (partly decayed vegetation). The effect of deep tillage has been explained. The effect of humus is to greatly increase the storage capacity of soils for water and to reduce evaporation. A pound of humus will store seven and one-half times as much moisture as a pound of sand, and the sand will lose its water by evaporation three and one-half times more rapidly than the humus. A clay soil will store only about one-fourth as much moisture as humus, and will lose it by evaporation twice as rapidly.

Plants use an enormous quantity of water. An acre of good corn will absorb and evaporate during its growth nearly 10 inches of water. About three-fourths of this amount will be required during the last seventy-five days of its growth, or at the rate of 2-2-5 inches of water a month. This is in addition to evaporation from the soil, which, even with the retarding influence of a dust mulch, will amount to several inches each month in midsummer. In case the land is plowed only 3 or 4 inches deep, though thoroughly pulverized, it will store an amount of moisture entirely insufficient to supply crop requirements in any protracted drought. These shallow and generally poorly prepared seed beds are the principal cause of the low corn yields in the south, and they affect the cotton yields similarly, but not so much, because cotton is a more drought-resisting plant than corn. If plowing is done at all, it is folly to prepare a seed bed so shallow as to bring about the almost total loss of the crop some years and a reduced crop every year.

Many farmers plow or cultivate their corn nearly as deeply as they break their land in preparing a seed bed, this leaves no space for roots in the pulverized and aired soil. Roots occupy a large space. If all the roots of a single vigorous cornstalk were placed end to end they would reach more than a mile, and if allowed by the plowing they will fill the soil to a considerable depth and feed in all portions of it.

The Root System of Corn.

At the Wisconsin agricultural experiment station it was found that when corn was 3 feet high the roots had penetrated the soil for 2 feet and thoroughly occupied it. At maturity