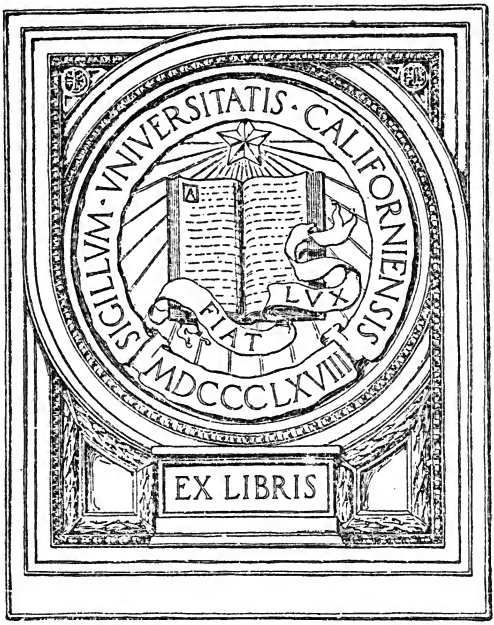

# Dry Stories

BY

NARNIE HARRISON BELL

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TO THE BOYS OF TEXAS
This Book is Affectionately Dedicated
By
The Author

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A STORY OF THE COTTON PATCH

# A Woman's Strategem

When Anne Winter looked down at the face of her first-born, she felt that motherhood was the supreme event of a woman's existence.

She had been a clever artist in her time; had painted some pictures that people talked of noisily, had decorated the ceiling of a big church in a big town, and done a portrait in oil of one of the ladies of the cabinet.

But on a certain January morning all this seemed mere nothingness to the light touch of tiny pink fingers like a drift of rose leaves on her breast. The babe had wailed because it had come into this big, brutal world, and when she had hushed its wailing, it seemed to her that she, Anne Winter, for the first time counted for something in this world. For the first time, she was a real factor in the history of humanity.

Her psychic senses seemed so quickened that the simplest things had a new significance, and everything in earth or heaven circled about that infant's head. A strip of sunlight coming through the shutter, and falling across the brow of the child, was, to her, the prophecy of a brilliant career; old nigger July told her that the tiny purplish V in the middle of the forehead was "a shore sign he'd git money—lots of it," and the nurse declared that she knew a thing or two about babies, and

she never saw a baby yet with its ears doubled up like that, who didn't have temper—plenty, and to spare. Anne smiled contentedly. That was all right. Everything was all right today. Temper meant force of character, Anne said proudly.

The child was a boy—otherwise this force of character would have been rated a defect unmentioned by either nurse or mother. He looked exactly like his father, of course; that chin, which was really nothing but a wrinkled cushion of pink velvet, was "Marse John Winter over agin—wasn't nothing 'bout 'im like Miss Anne 'ceptin' jes' the look outen his eyes" —there wasn't any look yet.

Anne thought that the shape of the baby's head resembled pictures she had seen of Daniel Webster or Henry Clay—she had forgotten which. She was ashamed to tell this to anybody but July, who retorted, "Clay—who's he? Hump, 'is head looks like a red apple—a big, fine red apple, though, Miss Anne—to me—but jes look at that mouf, ain't it jes' zackly like his daddy?—jes' for the world."

A light sigh fluttered from Anne Winter's lips, and a shadow dimmed the edge of her golden day. Her husband had not yet held their first-born in his arms. This morning he had to hurry to his work in the city, and could not possibly come back at noon. But how eagerly she waited his home-coming tonight, for Anne Winter thought when she should see her husband, tall and strong, standing beside her, holding on his arm this wee bit of humanity, this little life, which meant so much to both of them, a new bond, more sacred and more tender than before, would bind their lives together. Surely, she said to

herself, he would come home all right tonight—this, the first night when they could talk together about "our boy."

For the dark thread running through the golden pattern of today was the sickening fear that John would not be "at himself" tonight. The nights when he was not at himself were too many in the last year—though things had been better of late, and she had hoped that the child's coming would lead him away from the hateful habit which scorched his life and hers. Then a happy, helpful thought came to her. Calling the nurse she dictated a note to her husband, which she gave to old July to take to him at his work. She asked him to be sure to stop at a certain dry-goods store on his way home tonight, and buy the baby a shawl, blue and white, with soft fringes, she had seen in the window there.

Then she gave the note to the old negro, charging her especially not to wait for an answer. "Hand it to Mr. John," she said, "and hurry away, without even waiting for him to read it, do you understand?" Old July nodded. She understood very well. She had helped in such tactful strategems before.

Then Anne lay back on her pillow and closed her eyes, with a smile on her lips. She felt that she had saved the day. For him to buy the shawl on his way home was to go to a dry-goods store near by. To go to the dry-goods store was to miss the saloon on the other side. To miss the saloon, was to miss his chiefest temptation. Thus she felt that she had done the very best thing to bring him home as he should be tonight.

Just let him come home sober to her and the wee laddie tonight, and surely his

tender heart would feel the sanctity of the hour. She would not say one word to him of reform—only she knew that the solemn power of their first night together with their first-born would consecrate him to a better life, if the heart and brain were clear to feel, to understand. Tonight was a pivot in the history of her life. She had done well. All would be right, and swiftly Anne Winter's thoughts ran along the years before her; ran as a river singing and smiling to the sea. Soon she would hold the babe to the window at night to reach for the slim, new moon, and a little later to smile at the flash of spring's first bluebird through a slant of silver rain. How quickly would come the days when his small fingers would curl around hers, and she would lead him out to the garden to tiptoe for the half-open lily buds.

Children grew so fast, people told her, and how soon, he and she would stand side by side watching the rose-flush fade from the West, and the sentinel stars come out. Then later they would go down into the fields and drive the cows home, while they heard the birds call from the thicket edging the meadow pond. She would teach her boy to see and to hear the beautiful. To see and to hear it would be to love it. To love the pure and beautiful, would be to despise the vile and base. So, lying there, and dreaming on, she saw the wee one leap into years, when he hated vice and the homes and haunts of it. He would be careful of everything weak and helpless that crossed his path, would step aside from the cricket in the grass lest he should crush its chirp—would be tender with the little new wobbly calf, or the old tottering beggar passing by—she saw him a big boy, strong, yet tender, so her

thoughts ran—and she smiled, trying hard to come back to the now and here. But not yet; she saw her boy sitting by his father's knee in the evening-time, and listening to his father's tales of many things.

The father would tell him great beautiful stories of great, beautiful Texas, his parents' native state; and the boy would sit rapt in listening—of course he would. There would be the story of the Alamo, how Crockett fell, and Bowie smiling, though pierced with gaping wounds; how Travis had his cot lifted across the line to fight, and how all the Texans died there, scorning the surrender offered them by the swarthy Mexicans. John would tell him how only one woman and a girl babe were left, who slipped out to life and freedom from their pitiless enemies.

And John and she would know that the blessedness of the hour was but the lineal descendant of that pivotal first night, when he, sober, strong, stood by her, and in that first night with her first-born, renounced his vice and consecrated himself to a better life. That brought her back to the now, and the light stir of the wee one at her side. Tonight they would decide on the baby's name.

Just then she heard old July's returning step. As she entered the room, Anne lifted eager, questioning eyes. The old negro shook her head sadly: "He made me wait," she said, and then added brokenly, "he sent the shawl."

Then she wrapped the shawl, blue and white, with soft fringes, about the sleeping child.

Anne Winter turned her face to the wall and wept.

# The Emancipation of Bill

Marietta Hopkins belonged to the smart set, so her wedding day meant weeks of preparation. Picture hats, shower bouquets, lavalliere, Lohengrin—all of it—was ready at high noon—everything but the groom.

The society editor of the local newspaper wrote a delicate paragraph for the next day's issue, which stated that the bridegroom had "mysteriously disappeared on his wedding day; that foul play was suspected, and the bride-to-be was prostrated."

Coarser folks said bluntly that "Syd Stowers had skipped; he had not been long in the place, and thought Marietta was rich, found out his mistake, and being in it up to his neck, had simply jumped the town. But coarse people will say coarse things.

Marietta's heart was too elastic to keep an open wound. Her vanity, however, so suffered that she could not face the smart set in which she moved and had her being.

That is why she wrote a little letter to her uncle Philip in Terrytown asking him to secure her the position of teacher in the country school at the close of the free school term.

So she put away the fluffy trousseau, packed her smallest trunk with her plainest clothes, and took the train to Terry-

town, comforted in imagining the social stir that her absence would create.

Even in her simplest clothes, Marietta was a marvel to Terrytown. Her dainty apparel, her delicate beauty, her quick, light step—all of her, so permeated the dingy little place that every morning on her way to school, she was stared at by half the population; by some with shy suspicion—the women mainly—by others with wide-eyed reverence.

Chief among the latter was Bill Wilson, the biggest, stillest boy in school. Bill had grown up in the place, but had little to do with Terrytown or with Terrytown folks; was generally alone, walking mainly in the woods, staring up at the trees or stooping down to the grass, mumbling sometimes to himself, until Terrytown shook her head when she spoke of him, tapped her forehead, and whispered "queer."

Bill was queer. He had day-dreams that Terrytown knew not, and Marietta Hopkins was to him, the incarnation of one of these.

He first saw her as she was leaving the post office with a big square letter in her hand.

The only gew-gaw that Marietta had brought with her was the engagement ring on her finger. It flashed under Bill's eye, causing him to turn, look and stumble backward in the rapturous surprise of seeing one of his dreams in flesh and blood beside him. Marietta smiled at the stumble, and passed out.

After that he sat silent in the school room, while the teacher went mechanically through the classes, unconscious of her biggest pupil's adoration.

He dared not speak to her, nor to come near her. He worshiped afar.

One afternoon when school was dismissed and Bill waited—it being his turn to sweep the school house—he was amazed at the daring of Mandy Meadows, who walked to the teacher's desk, talked easily with her, just as she would with a Terrytown woman, even toyed with the ring on Marietta's white hand as she arranged the bunch of wild flowers, placed there in secret by Bill.

"That a dimint, Miss Hopkins?" Mandy asked, touching the stone.

"Yes, a fine stone," answered Marietta. "I'm a judge of diamonds, if I am anything. My father let me select this for my graduation gift, and the jeweler said that I guessed correctly the value of nearly all the stones he showed me. I know a real diamond the minute I see one."

"There's a whole lot o' dimints berried some'ers in Terrytown," Mandy remarked.

"Why, where?" Marietta was all interest, and Mandy delighted to give the new teacher the chief tradition of the neighborhood.

Bill slouched out, taking his pencil and tablet to the flat rock by the spring.

He had heard that old story of the buried treasure ever since he could remember. He knew every word that Mandy would say, and he was sick of it. So he would sit by the spring till they left. Besides, he had for many days been trying to write a letter to his teacher, but always ended by tearing it up. He was determined to write one today, and to hand it to her himself, unwilling to risk it in any messenger's hands.

Inside the school house, Mandy droned

out the story, and Marietta listened eagerly.

"Yer see, Miss Hopkins, that there big white house up yonder on the top of that there hill? Old Miss Nancy Brown lives up there by herself—she's kinder half-witted, yer know." Marietta nodded.

"Well, her brother, Mr. George Brown, he was rich, orful rich, made it ever bit er farmin', and he died an left jes' Miss Nancy. She was his sister. Well, afore he died he made his will"—here Mandy had to stop to swallow—it always made her mouth water to tell a tale—"an he—er—he said in his will he had done took all his money and bought dimmits—dimints with ever bit uv everything—only jest the home fer Miss Nancy, an he 'lowed in his will as he had made all his money by diggin'—yer see he wuz a farmer—he 'lowed 'at anybody what got his money would have to dig fer it—yer see he hid the dimints—berried 'em, Miss Hopkins," Nancy brought her fist down on the desk, "and anybody what finds 'em by diggin' gits 'em—that's eggsackly how the will reads."

"Has any one ever looked for them?" Marietta asked in a low voice.

"Lord! Everybody in Terrytown has been a diggin' ever since the ole man Brown died. Miss Nancy starts into diggin' fresh ever spring. Some folks 'lows that's what Bill Wilson is after, a-goin' around so much by hisself a-lookin' like he's a-lookin' for sumpin'—but I don't think Bill keers nothin' 'bout them dimints. He's so curus like—he jest likes the wild things in the woods, I'm thinkin'. He talks to 'em plum frenly, the rabbits an' birds an' things. He's out there now a-lyin' on the big flat rock by the spring,

a-waitin' fer us to go so he can sweep, I reckon."

As they left the school house, Bill followed close, his heart beating thickly under the letter in his breast pocket. He would hand it to Marietta when Mandy left her, and then go quickly away for the school mistress to read it alone. The sweeping would be done afterward.

And this is the letter Bill wrote:

"My Dear Miss Hopkins:

"I want to tell you how glad I am that you come down here to teach. I have dreampt about folks like you are, and wisht I could be around them ever day, so as I could kinder lift myself up to the things they think about. Since I seen you it's easy. Can't tell you what I mean, but I will jest say: To know you and see you makes me want to try harder to be better ever day, and to make a good true man, like folks are, that are like you.

"Your scholar,

"William Wilson."

When Mandy turned into the road leading apart from the school mistress, Bill quickened his steps. Instead of going home, Marietta walked straight up the hill toward the big white house where half-witted Nancy lived.

Bill's hand was on the letter ready to deliver it as soon as he dared. Passing a clump of trees, they came on Miss Nancy digging by the hedge-row, enclosing the garden plot. Marietta slackened her steps and gazed at the woman curiously, just as Miss Nancy with a smothered cry, dropped her hoe, fell on her knees, picked up a moldly leathern bag, and sitting flat on the ground, hurriedly poured the contents into her lap.

Marietta leaned over the hedge breathlessly. She could touch old Nancy's shoulder, and she looked excitedly at the flashing heap of gems on the worn gingham apron.

Bill waited close behind.

After a moment's careful scrutiny, Marietta spoke lightly, touching Nancy's arm.

"Come," she said coaxingly, "sell me those glass beads, will you?"

Nancy shook her head, folding her apron over the pile of rainbows.

"Why, they are nothing but beads—glass beads," Marietta persisted. "I'll give you a dollar for them. See, here it is. I want them to make a necklace for my little sister's doll! Come, don't be a fool."

For answer, Nancy, half-crouching, half walking, slipped stealthily into the house, guarding her precious gems.

Marietta, muttering her vexation, turned homeward.

Bill stepped out of sight behind the clump of trees, holding to a branch, a little, to steady himself.

When the school mistress had passed on, he took the letter from his pocket, and because of his hands trembling, tore it into bits with his teeth. The wind lifting it, scattered it through the woods. That moment was the emancipation of Bill.

And the end was but an expression of the beginning, as it always is.

Way back in the early days of Kentucky, the blue grass region knew a Hopkins family—blue-blooded, high stepping, they called themselves. Race horses stamping in the stables, cellars full of wine, old Bourbon flashing on the sideboard — gentlemen of leisure lolling, drinking, drowsing, telling tales of women and of wine. Children were born who

did likewise. Their children thought the same thoughts, of course, but a slow growing depletion of finances made the doing impossible.

As years went on there was a falling away of fine horses and bursting barns, and the cellar's supply grew scantier. But there was always the haughty spirit, the love of luxury, the desire for show.

Then there came a day when one of the Hopkins men forged a check to try to save the stud that would soon be led from the barn.

Gradually integrity of soul had been drowned in the Hopkins family—drowned by drink and by pomposity. Among this forger's last remaining servants, was one Bill Wilson, a gardener, who worshiped his master, as being far above himself.

But the old gardener chanced to see him sign a check with a name not his own, and his loyalty was scorched into nothingness at the sight.

Heredity is unconquerable, though a strong hand may handle it with bit and rein. Knowing this, can we blame Marietta, or can we wonder at Bill?

# My Friend, Dan Morgan

We boast much of America's democracy, but I believe that every city ward has its boss, every village its despotic ruler.

If you should go into straggly, crooked little Harrisburg, Tennessee, any day about sundown, you could tell, with a half eye, who was Harrisburg's uncrowned king.

You would see him standing in front of a group of men seated on two long benches before Dan Morgan's blacksmith shop.

For an hour between working time and supper, the business world of Harrisburg, with a quid of tobacco in its cheek, a slim pine stick in one hand, a pocket knife in the other, settled down to discuss the shortcomings and long comings of Uncle Sam.

Dan Morgan, the blacksmith, was the autocrat of the gathering.

Just how he came to be it is hard to say, but something in him held sway and it was a maxim in Harrisburg that "what Dan Morgan says goes," and as I have indicated he generally "said" for an hour at sundown, the crowd about listening, chewing vigorously, spitting when some special point was made, a nod, grunt, chuckle, being their part of the conversation.

Dan Morgan's father, a full blood Irishman, and his mother, a Scotch woman

who boasted a tartan and a clan, had bequeathed to Dan a quick wit, a kind heart and a deep-seated integrity.

They had come to America when Dan was three years old, about thirty years before, so that Dan's roll of his R's now and then, and some quaint words sprinkled through his speech to season it a little, told of the blood in his veins, down here in Tennessee valley, where he had come a few years before, bringing Millie, his bride—he married an East Tennessee mountain girl—his sister Margaret, a spinster—had built him a little home on time payments, set up a blacksmith shop, and by a sort of psychological supremacy, had come to be the leader and expounder of Harrisburg's philosophy of life.

Gradually it leaked out in Harrisburg that Miss Margaret was sixteen years older than Dan; that for some reason or other she did not come to America when Dan and her parents did, but spent about a year in Dundee and Killarney, coming over later, living with them in a little Hampshire village till they died. Then Dan came west, as he called it, Miss Margaret following when he married Millie.

Harrisburg women said they didn't know—they didn't like to start anything —they never wanted to bother in other folks business—but they somehow believed that Miss Margaret had been disappointed in love.

"Mrs. Minerva Brown was over there one day, and Miss Margaret went into her trunk, and Mrs. Minerva could almost swear she saw a pair of white shoes—anyhow it was something done up in tissue paper and they were lying on top of something that looked like a pile of white veil. Apt as anyway she was engaged to a man,

and apt as anyway he slipped onto a ship and run off, and she followed him, and apt as anyway when she got over here she found he had married somebody else."

Harrisburg should not have hinted that Miss Margaret had been disappointed in love. She may have been disappointed in a lover, which is a very different sort of thing.

On this particular day of which I am thinking, Dan's crowd, as they called themselves, were chewing more vigorously and spitting oftener than usual, for Dan in his slow, ponderous fashion, was dealing sledge-hammer blows at the Tennessee legislature which had passed a law requiring the saloons to close at 9:30 at night.

"It's only another way of saying when men shall drink and where," Dan declared—"this 9:30 law, and how much, I guess. It's getting less and less a free country—drawing the reins tighter every day—and it is drawing the reins too tight that makes a horse with any spirit in him try to kick out of harness, I reckon."

Amos Harper, the truck grower, spat on the ground at that and Ike Rainey, a corner grocer, took from the pine stick a long swath with his knife. Dan Morgan knew what he was talking about.

"And after all," Dan went on, " a man that wants to make a pig of himself—why you can't law him out of it, can you? A decent gentleman gets his decency from inside of him; the law can't give it to him. Why not let the saloons stay open as long as they want to, like the dry-goods stores and groceries, if they carry a license like them? And then let men have common sense and decency enough to patronize

them like men, who want a little company, not like pigs, that wallow in a trough."

"It's them wimmen's doin's," Amos ventured to suggest. Dan nodded. "Spec so, and I tell my woman, Millie, if she stays at home and trains our boy right, she's doing the biggest temperance work on earth. Train him up to be a master of himself, too strong to let stuff in a bottle be master of him. Train him so he can drop in, take a drink with a friend, like a man and stop before he gets to be a fool. If the women trained up the boys that way, they'd be getting at the root of the matter a hundred times more than all this temperance reform."

Jim Duncan, Harrisburg's one old bachelor, snickered. "It looks that way to me. Seems like wimmin are takin' too much dish."

Everybody laughed. Jim passed for a woman-hater.

"You all know me," Dan went on, lifting his massive head a little. "I try to live decent and honest. I'd lay down my life for my woman and our boy. I don't make no debts. I go to church every Sunday that comes, God knows I try to be a man and I don't want some gimlet-headed lawmaker telling me I can drop in Saturday night at Jim's place up there, have a dram with a bunch of the boys, a game of dominoes, but I must be sure to go home at half past nine. Rot! As if I was a baby and had to be sent to bed when time comes! Strikes me that Tennessee in the United States of America, has some of old England's blood in her yet. What did we fight for, if not for liberty?" And the men nodded and laughed—Dan Morgan knew a thing or two.

Just then Dan's little boy, three years

old, came running up, "Mudder say tum home to supper; you have to eat wite now," and Dan, with a great laugh, swung the boy to his shoulder, saying, "All right, sir; you are the boss."

The men began to scatter. "Great country this is, boys," Dan said to them. "Home and state stand in together, I reckon. State tells us when we shall drink and the women tell us when we shall eat. How's that for a free country?" and the rest of his words were lost in the whirl of a loud guffaw.

"Supper was getting cold, Dan," Millie said at the door. He gave her a whirl as if she were a feather and seated her breathless and smiling in the big arm chair. "You women are getting more and more unruly."

"Getting more ruly, you mean, Dan," his sister Margaret put in. "Ain't you Irish enough to want Home Rule?"

"You bet you, but they tell me a lot of women have been tampering with the fool legislature."

Millie put her hand over her mouth. "Eat your supper first, you monster," she said, "then talk about the legislature. I don't want to be till 1:20 getting the dishes washed."

"All right, may I have a piece of ham?"

"I passed the shop an hour ago," Margaret said, when supper was done, "and heard ye trouncin' the legislature, Dan. What's the legislature done?"

"Closed the saloons at 9:30. Says we must stop our jokes and drams and dominoes and get in bed by ten o'clock like good boys. Wooden heads! Why can't they let the saloons stay open as long as they want to, like the dry goods stores? What's the difference?

"I get disgusted at these lawmakers, always a-meddling in the other fellow's business. This 9:30 law is only another way of saying how much a fellow shall drink or how little. Where's the right in that? Might as well tell me how much turnips and hog jowl I shall eat for dinner. What's the difference?"

"The difference is," his sister answered, "that no matter how much turnips and hog jowl a man eats, it don't take away his wits, but after two or three drams, as you call it, he becomes—how d'ye put it?—an irresponsible creature, therefore a ward of the state. And it takes jest about 9:30, I'm thinking, for ye men to begin losing yer wits, then the state takes hold of ye, like the other lunatics, and turns ye in."

"Don't be a fool, Margaret," Dan retorted.

"Can't help it—runs in the family," Margaret laughed heartily, in which Millie joined and the baby crowed and chuckled for company.

"Legislature ain't said yet how many drinks we can take before 9:30," Dan answered mockingly.

"No, nor after," his sister replied. "Now, Dan Morgan, we've been sittin' here listenin' to ye spout a lot of stuff that ye know yerself ain't got a thing in the world to do with that new law. There ain't a word in that law about how much a man shall drink and you know it. When the saloon closes at 9:30 at night, he can take home a ten gallon jug on his shoulder and swill it all night if he wants to. That's a matter 'twixt him and—"

"His wife," Millie put it. "Anyhow the law ain't got a word to say about a man's right to drink all he wants."

"Same thing," Dan protested.

"What fun is there taking the jug home? It's the jolly crowd we want—a dram now and then with the boys, over the jokes and the game. Who wants to bring home his drams?"

"Or his jokes, either," Margaret suggested. "If ye were to bring them home yer hands would be smutty when ye got here, Dan Morgan."

"Well," he yawned, "I guess it's time to go to bed, except a Salvation Army lass, and I'm going to see that the legislature makes them stop handing 'round their tracts after 9:30 at night. All I want to say," he added more seriously, "is that no outside restrictions on earth can make a man be a man; they must be inside."

"That's right, Dan," his sister answered, "the man's inside, and he should never take inside anything to kill the man. Good night," and she paused a moment to lay her toil-worn hands on his shoulder. Dan covered it with his palm.

"Ye are a good girl, Margaret." And then his sister left the room. He turned to his wife, Millie, and added, "but a little sharp with her tongue."

"She's very wise, Dan."

"Yes, but don't you ever fear, Millie, no matter how much nonsense we may talk, that whisky'll be unmanning me."

"I know," Millie answered, "had you thought, Dan, that we were married four years tonight? I've always meant to keep a little book of our married life, writing a sort of summary of every five years. "I'll keep it twenty years, just to show how things go with us. Won't that be beautiful to read, dear?"

Dan drew her head down to his broad shoulder. Only the firelight flickered over

her tender face and the long hair loosened, rippling in yellow gold fell to her knees.

"That it will, Millie mavourneen," he said gently, as he loved to call her sometimes, "One year more before we have the summary, eh?"

"Yes, four years just gone. We have the blessed boy, the home half paid for, a good business at the shop, our dear Margaret." "And our love and trust," Dan added softly. "Please God that will always stay. And when I talk about these foolish laws, Millie, don't ever think I'm wanting more drams than's coming to a decent man. I'd like to see the stuff that could master me and make me forget you and laddie over there, see?" and he rolled up his sleeves, drawing his muscles until they stood out like whipcords.

Millie lay her slim fingers on the knotted tendons. "Could anything master you? I'm not afraid of that," she said softly, as he kissed her.

The next night was Saturday night, the regular night for Dan's crowd to meet at Jim's place. There was always the smoke, the string of yarns, the round of drinks, the game of dominoes, which lasted till midnight, generally. Be it said to the credit of Dan Morgan, who ruled the ranch, that the crowd was generally what's called orderly; that is, nobody's head was broken, and Jim's windows, chairs and tables were treated with equal respect.

Tonight was all important, for then would be the discussion of the new law, and when the hour came for meeting, every man was at his post, the post being most necessary for some after they left Jim's place.

"A decent game of dominoes is done for

now boys. Who can make 250 by 9:30 o'clock," Amos Harper said, by way of introducing the subject.

"Aw, whose gointer quit then?" Lee Balls put in. "Guess Jim ain't gointer stand for that, air ye, Jim?" he said, with a wink and a nod at Jim Simpson, the owner and proprietor of Jim's place.

"Pretty hard on me," was the answer. "Saturday night, anyway. Half of the rest of the week I don't make anything, but you fellows droppin' in here Saturday after yer git yer week's pay, kinder settin' around, stayin' late, keeps things sorter goin'."

Dan Morgan was silent, but everybody looked at Dan to see what he would say. After a little Jim Rainey stepped across to the saloon keeper and in a loud whisper, said: "Al Hinson's all right. Al's got sense enough to know there ain't no sense in that law. He knows when to see things and when not to." (Al Hinson was constable). "Ain't that right, Jim?"

Dan shook his head. "No! When I live in a country, I'll come under its laws, Jim. This is a fool law, but when I can't stand a state's laws I'll put out. If Tennessee gets to sawin' on the bits too much, why there's Arkansaw?"

That settled Al Hinson's deafness and blindness so far as Jim's place was concerned. When the closing law took effect the crowd dispersed at 9:30, but they went oftener, and Margaret and Millie gradually came to realize that instead of Dan's one night in the week out, there were two or three nights and as the weeks slipped into months, the little cottage was not as blithe as it used to be. Somehow Dan was getting cross, and once or twice when Laddie, as they called him, would

have climbed on his knee he pushed him away half angerly, saying he was tired, to let him alone.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, he began to open his shop a little later, and once or twice, a horse stamped impatiently at the door. Then its owner rode him away, too hurried to wait for Dan.

Margaret began to watch his face keenly at meal time. "You are not well, Dan," she said to him one evening. "You are not like yourself."

"Well, I'd like to be somebody else for awhile. I'm getting sick and tired of this drive. What's the use?"

"Come, that's not like you, Dan Morgan, and I'm willing to say its your liver that's makin' you talk like that and what's the matter with your liver is ye are takin' too much at Jim's place, and if ye'll jest stick to it long enough it'll get the better of ye, body and soul."

"There ye go preachin'."

"All right, call it preaching if ye want to, and down with the drink is my text."

"That's what the boys do, Mag. We down with the drink," Dan laughed. "What does a woman know about it? Can't I take care of myself? Millie, there, ain't afraid I'll turn fool, are you mavourneen?"

"I haven't been," Millie answered simply, with a tinge of reproof in her tone. Dan stopped and lifted Laddie on his knees. "Dad was cross a bit ago, Laddie, just tired, that's all. Now come give me a great big hug. Dan's got to go and have a round with the boys."

"That's four nights out this week," Miss Margaret said.

"Well, what if it's eight nights this week? Ain't I my own boss?"

"Ye won't be yer own boss at this rate. Now come, Dan; I've seen smarter, stronger men than you go down in slavery. There's that in the stuff that makes a man not care to be a man, and when he doesn't care, he doesn't try, and when he doesn't try he loses hold and falls, doesn't he? You know my own story, Dan, my lad at Killarney, the best and bravest man. Ye know more! Ye know that Ireland is a country of great minds, a land that had its Grattan, O'Connell, Parnell, Moore, yet ye know that Ireland has never taken first rank in the world. She has always been a sort of laughing stock among the nations. Ye know that our own mother, because she was Scotch, thought herself a wee bit better than father, who was a full Irishman, and why? Because Ireland has always been a nation of drinkers. That's the very thing that has kept down the glory of the country. The pride that's in ye, an the self-respect, goes to sleep after the first dram or two; and how can you expect it to do its work when you take something that puts that pride to sleep, and when it sleeps too long it's dead, and only the grace of God can resurrect the dead to fight the fight you have to fight before ye win."

Dan Morgan did not play dominoes at Jim's place that night. But there were other nights that he did go and more than one woman in Harrisburg began to wish and pray that Jim's place wasn't there.

It wasn't long until there came the time for Millie to write in the little book the summary of the first five years of their married life, and the last sentences in the book were these: "My Dan doesn't go to church with me any more. He seems tired on Sunday morning and wants to

stay at home. We miss him, Margaret, Laddie and I, and the sermons and songs are not so sweet as when he sat by my side."

And the women whispered to each other softly, "It's all from going to Jim's place, and would to God it wasn't there."

I wonder how many women in the yorld have whispered words like these?

About eight years of their married life had gone by when one night, midnight came, but no Dan. Through the cottage window, Millie gazed, straining eye and ear, for the first sight or sound of him. The forge next door was deserted, dark. The little town was silent as the grave. Still she stared into the darkness, listening for his first footfall. Oh the agony of such waiting! For the anxious eye to fancy a shape in the gloom coming hitherward, only to see the dim outlines melt into nothingness. To strain the ear to catch that faint far footfall which comes no nearer, and proves to be but the crackling of a twig, the fall of an acorn. To guess, to fear, to wonder why the long delay. To lie down for forced slumber, to rise again, to long and look and listen. God help all women who have kept such vigils as this!

It was almost dawn when he came in haggard and silent. Millie, who, somehow, did not want him to find her watching, had crept back to bed at the click of the gate-latch and roused up at his entrance to ask where he had been.

"At work," he said sullenly. "Didn't you hear me in my shop? Didn't you look over there and see the light? You've been asleep."

The woman cowered in a heap; she was cold, alone, absolutely. The iron had en-

tered her soul and she could not find God's hand just then, though she groped for it as a child does in the dark.

Dan had told her a lie. The Dan she loved and trusted with her whole heart had left her. She was alone and frightened. She had clung so to the great, strong man. In the dim light she stretched out her arms as if to catch something to stay her soul.

The old ideal had shaken her off and she was trying so hard to cling to it still.

Margaret knew at the breakfast table what Millie's white, drawn face meant and when Dan, too sick to work, went out and sat on the wood bench, gloomily puffing his pipe, she took her sister in her arms.

"'Twas not the staying out," Millie whispered with the drawn breath of one who had been struck a blow. 'Twas the lie he told."

"That wasn't our Dan," Margaret whispered soothingly, "that's the Dan that Jim's place is making every day."

When ten years had gone by little Millie wrote the second summary which ended thus: "Things haven't gone so well with us. The home isn't yet paid for, and Dan's work is falling off. My Dan has changed, but I love him yet with all my heart, and I pray God the old time trust will come back to me some day."

And now as we begin the third section of Millie's summary, I want you to look upon my friend, Dan Morgan, not so much as a weak and wicked man, as a man overtaken by the disease of drunkenness.

The fact that a man becomes liable to this disease is merely an accident nine cases out of ten. He happens to be near when whisky is sold and in a very simple

way he acquires the appetite and in various individuals, various mental and physical faculties become diseased. In Dan Morgan's case, physicians would say that the higher emotions were in a state of atrophy. The emotions of religion, of reverence, of affection, of pride, ambition were numbed by the drug and he had no desire to conquer the habit which was ruining his life. An intermittent desire to do so was made inactive by a weak will, a faculty which soon becomes paralyzed by drink.

The personnel of Jim's place had changed some in the last ten years. A few of the old topers had died, but a fresh relay of younger men took their places, and the business thrived

The line of steady drinkers that a saloon must have to keep going was kept in fairly good condition, for when one man tumbled over out of line a new recruit took his place—some boy brought up in town. Dan Morgan was still the dictator of the crowd, but he talked less than formerly, drank more and was one patron that Jim's place could always count on. In his cottage which had never been paid for, his boy, now almost a man, was big and strong like his father, and was learning a trade.

The two women took in sewing and carefully hoarded their little earnings, for the specific object of paying out the home. Time and again they would take down the little leather bag which they always hung at the end of the mantel in a sort of hiding place, and count over its contents. Margaret often figured the money still due on the place, and reckoned again and again the time when they could hope to discharge the debt. Laddie, as they still

called him, was able to add a little to the store and Dan Morgan did seem to have a transitory shame when he saw the three count over their little store, look at the line of Margaret's figures, sigh and return the bag to its hiding place.

One night a strange thing happened. Dan did not come home to supper. The two women had sewed till late, Laddie was asleep, Margaret and Millie had just lain down, when the door to Margaret's room was pushed softly open and by the flicker of firelight on the hearth she could see Dan Morgan stealthily cross the floor and feel along the mantel till he came to the place where the little leather bag hung. Margaret sprang from the bed and called to Millie. "Don't do that, Dan," she pleaded, as he took the bag from its nail and dropped it into his pocket. Dan's great arm pushed the women aside, and lunging out of the room, he passed into the darkness and was gone.

The two women looked at each other an instant, and then with silent accord threw on their clothes and hand in hand followed him. "I heard today that Jim Simpson was trying to borrow money to renew the lease on the building where he has his saloon," Margaret said, as they walked swiftly on, just in time to see Dan pass into the bright light, wedge his way through the chairs and hand the little bag to Jim Simpson, who took it greedily, locked it in a drawer, slapping Dan Morgan on the back and handing him a glass of foaming beer.

Next day Harrisburg was all a-flutter that Miss Margaret and Millie had walked into Jim Simpson's saloon the night before. They had spoken to Jim and he had handed them a little bundle after a mo-

ment's hesitation. There were many theories about it. "Maybe 'twas some sort of message from that man that fooled her."

"Apt as any he was there." "Did a man fool her?" a newcomer asked. "Well, that's what we've always thought. Miss Minerva Brown one time seen something in Miss Margaret's trunk that seemed to be a white veil and shoes and she never was married, you know." "Why don't somebody ask Dan?" "They did." "Who did?" "Amos Harper." "What did Dan say?" "Knocked him down."

Some time after Millie wrote her third summary and the last sentence was this: "Would to God Jim's place was gone. It makes men lie and steal."

"I've a little more hope for Dan since I heard he knocked Amos Harper down," Margaret said. "I thought his pride had been drowned in drink, but it ain't clean dead, you see. Who knows but he'll take a turn for the better—while there's life there's hope," as the doctors say.

"If we could get some new medicine," Millie said, falling into the thought.

Soon after that, by some influence, Harrisburg didn't know what, a preacher from the East Tennessee mountains, an old man, with a message that gripped the hearts of men, came down to Harrisburg to preach for a while. The people he wanted to talk to didn't come to hear him, so he was asked to talk at the place most natural to choose, Dan Morgan's blacksmith shop. Dan stood in the door and listened, and the old preacher's text was "Son, Remember," from the parable of Dives and Lazarus. As he preached, Dan Morgan's thoughts went back to a little Hampshire town. He heard the bird's call from the thicket edging the meadow

pond and caught a whiff of the wild honeysuckle in the woods. He saw his mother's face. He saw Millie for the first time, her yellow hair sweeping the ground as she stooped to fill a pitcher by the mountain spring, and as he asked her for a drink, he heard her low, sweet laugh, like a mountain waterfall.

Dan Morgan waked, shook himself, and looked about him. Millie stood near him and it seemed to him that she had been away for a long time. He looked at the boy as if he had never seen him before. He had been numbed or drugged, or something. When the preacher ended, and asked for any man who wanted to "talk over business with him," as he put it, "to let him know where to meet him." Dan Morgan beckoned him to come to the blacksmith shop.

Margaret's keen eyes saw, and as she and Millie turned away quickly toward home, she said "thank God, he's gointer take Dan's temperature. Let us pray, Millie, that he'll diagnose his case all right."

"I've just waked up, parson," Dan said. "It seems to me I've been stupefied or paralyzed, in my mind, I mean, and I don't mind saying I've kinder lost my grip on things, on God, maybe. If you'll sorter help me to take hold again I—I—do believe I can make it through all right."

"Why, yes; I guess so, Dan Morgan," the old preacher answered, without any visible emotion or flow of sentiment, "lots of men lose hold. I have often in my time. Different things cause it, you know. Sometimes it's money, sometimes it's fast horses, sometimes it's one thing and another. Sometimes it's strong drink. What's been your trouble?"

"Well, drink, I reckon," Dan said, confusedly. "The stuff can't master me, if I don't want it to; but somehow all these years, I didn't care if it did—until today."

"Queer, ain't it, that the way whisky ruins a man is by making him not care if it does. Well, I'll be here two weeks, or more, Dan, and we'll try to help each other out. I've got to be up on Chestnut Ridge to see a poor fellow up there that imagines God has forgotten him. I'll drop around in the shop tomorrow, and say, Dan," he called, as he started off, "I'll just leave you to do your own praying this evening while you are at work in the shop. I've got so many folks to look after, and you understand your case yourself pretty well."

Dan smiled broadly at the parson's business-like way of putting things.

"I can leave the praying to you, then, can I?"

"O yes, I guess so, parson, if I ain't forgot how."

"It's mighty simple, but a mighty curing thing, praying is, Dan. Just telling God you are feeling lonesome and far-off, because you have been soul-sick and ask him to take hold of you and look after you while you try to do your best. Goodbye, I'll see you tomorrow."

Dan and the parson agreed to be confidential friends and when the time came he talked to Dan a little about Jim's Place and wondered if they could get some one to come down to Harrisburg and speak to the people about voting out such places. The question would be submitted soon.

"I don't think they'd listen to anybody comin' in," Dan said. "Some of us around

here might talk against it on the quiet, kinder like."

The preacher had not quite carried his point. "Well, it will be a quicker way for me to round up the fellows some day and you and I sorter together, hand 'em a package. What d'ye say?"

"Oh, all right."

"Well, I'll read a chapter and lead a song and you do the preachin'. How's that?" Dan laughed a big old-fashioned laugh.

"Me preach? Harrisburg'll think that judgment day has come. Well, I'll go at it if you'll let me take my own text."

"What will be your text!"

"Jim's Place?"

And this is the sermon that my friend, Dan Morgan, preached:

"The parson has just told you that he has asked me to preach for him today and take Jim's Place for my text. The preaching part's a joke, but Jim's Place ain't, I'm here to say, and I reckon I know if anybody does. I ain't gointer talk to you fellows about how much you ought to drink or how little. 'Cause I've quit ain't no reason I'm going to try to make you quit. How much a man drinks or how little is his own business, I take it—his and the parson's and his homefolks, maybe. It's no business of mine. I ain't yet got no right to even calculate with you how much you can take and keep your wits; for about twelve years I ain't had room to talk, room in my stomach, I mean.

"So I'll be stickin' to my text, which is Jim's Place.

"That is some of my business, as it is a public institution with the strong arm of the law back of it, and you and me are supposed to help make the laws. Now, next

month the people of Bedford county and us here in Harrisburg, havin' got pretty well acquainted with Jim's Place and others like it, we've got to say—the question has come up some how or other—whether Jim's Place and the others deserve to have the strong arm of the law. Instead of the word 'arm,' I'll use license, I believe.

"The higher courts of the country say—we read it the other day—that the citizens of any state, county or community have a right to prohibit any trade or business or place which interferes with the health, peace or morals of the community—I learned that by heart. Now the first thing fer us to decide is whether Jim's Place interferes with the health, peace or morals of his community. Then you fellows can decide fer yourselves whether you want it to or not. To put it different, is Jim's Place a public nuisance and do we want public nuisances in Harrisburg? We've got a right to decide that. That's our personal liberty. You know we got rid of that hog pen in the north part of town last summer, but we have to handle this a little different, fer that hog pen didn't have no federal, state, county or community fence around it; Jim's Place has. Now does Jim's Place interfere with the health of the town? Every fellow here knows inside of him whether it does or not.

"Of course you don't have to drink this stuff if you don't want to, but you want to. Do you want to because the taste is born in you or because Jim's Place is here? Tell me that! They tell me that if the place wasn't there men would get whisky some way, if they wanted it bad enough. They would. They'd slip it in, steal it in,

hunt it down on the creek, but it takes years of trainin' in a convenient saloon to make men want it that way. A tenderfoot don't. And do we want this trainin' school in Harrisburg? But I'm off my text. What I was startin' to say was that Jim's Place does interfere with the health of the town.

"Does it interfere with the peace of Harrisburg?

"Ask Widow Brown and Widow Batts; ask Amos Harper where's his other ear, ask Jim Batts where's his other eye.

"That's how they celebrated Christmas eve at Jim's Place.

"Now, about ten years ago, when any row started up there I allus took pains to quiet the fellows down, but I got so I didn't care or I got too slow motioned to stop it, I don't know which.

"Does Jim's Place interfere with our morals? There ain't no use of discussin' that. I might get arrested for usin' indecent language in public if I started on that line.

"So we'll come back to our text. Is Jim's Place a public nuisance? Somebody says no, 'cause it brings money to the town. Well, we are the town. Has Jim's Place brought money to us? I don't call three or four men in the town, the town, do you? This town has 1,100 people. Take out Jim Simpson and his folks, that's six, Tom Taylor, that rents the building, and his, that's eleven. Dr. Bradford, that has to sew some of you up, that's twelve; that old Mexican and his eight, that sell Chihuahua liniment fer bruises, that's twenty that Jim's Place brings money to. Do you call that twenty the town, or the other one thousand and eighty?

"I know somebody's askin' why I'm

pitchin' into Jim's Place when I've been keepin' company with it all these years—why? Because I wanted to; I've never wanted to before. I always knew it was a pest, a sore, a worm, eatin' out the heart of Harrisburg, but I didn't care if it did. How'd I come to care?

"Well, the parson come along and give me a dose of what he calls spiritual medicine, and I come to myself. He got here just in time. Makes me think of that nigger we like to hung last summer fer something he never done. We caught him hidin' (half the niggers in the country was hidin'), and we took him out and had him under a tree when Al Simpson came lopin' up hollering 'Hold on, that ain't the right man.' When he got loose and could speak, you all remember he said: 'Lord, Marse Al, if you'd got here a little bit later, I wouldn't keered whether you come at all or not.' So I guess, boys, in my case, the preacher got here just in time. Ain't that the way of it, parson?" Dan said, looking back of him for the first time.

"Why, where's the parson?" Dan said, confusedly.

"Lit out soon as you begun to talk," a man on the outskirts said. "Told me his stayin' here seemed kinder like a stranger at a family reunion. Don't you see him away off yonder on his clay bank strollin' long Chestnut Ridge?"

"Go on, Dan, we're with you," a voice cried.

Dan's lip quivered for the first time. Then he mastered himself.

"All right," he said slowly, "if you fellows stand by me next month we'll show old Tennessee we know what a public nuisance is, and we don't want one in Harrisburg." (Applause.)

"What does a preacher do when he quits?" Dan asked sheepishly.

"They sing the doxology," Finley said, proud of knowing the word.

"Aw, we don't know no doxology," Amos Harper put in.

"Well, jest sing something ye all know," Dan suggested. "Don't have to be no church song, I reckon."

After a little discussion it was decided that the only thing everybody there knew was the chorus of "Old Black Joe." With this they made the welkin ring.

Dan could not sing, except in his big, warm heart. When they had done, he added, with his eyes downcast:

"That was all right! I guess we are movin' on boys, and I reckon, in a kind of different way, them angel voices are callin' to you and me."

When the vote was taken the returns were written precinct by precinct, on the big board in front of Dan's blacksmith shop. Dan stood watching them, his face pale and tense with anxiety. Millie, a trembling hand on his shoulder, stared wide-eyed at the figures as they were placed in line. When the last returns were counted it was nearly dawn, but still they stood, until they heard a voice call out that Bedford county was dry as a bone. At the words Millie swayed a little toward the strong arm that caught her and held her close, Dan's massive head drooped to her shoulder, and he did what every strong man—thank Heaven—does some time—he sobbed like a little child.

# A Story of the Cotton Patch

Margaret Leighton belonged to a family whose only inheritance was a coat of arms, and a family tree. People did say that if you climbed far enough, you could find a man hanging on a limb of the family tree. But Margaret's father never spoke of that. He always boasted of their pedigree, told of their great kinfolks who owned big plantations on the banks of the river James in Virginia, said his father had a hundred slaves—his sisters never combed their hair or laced their shoes—Margaret didn't believe their children did either—that he himself always had a nigger to bring up his horse, "Spec," in the morning, would ride or hunt till noon—would bring home Tip Gilbraith or Jack Marmaduke to dinner; after dinner, a smoke, a snooze, a game of cards, a big carouse in the big dining hall, and maybe after supper a visit to the nigger quarters to watch the niggers dance.

Margaret often listened to these stories while she and her mother patched, darned, or even washed out the clothes and hung them up to dry. By hard work they managed, with the help of wealthy relatives, to keep the pot boiling and the wolf from the door. But it was a hard pull and sometimes the pot only simmered; sometimes they could see the gray wolf's teeth as they lay awake in the night.

The women worked, as I have said,

while John Leighton sat in a big chair, talked ancestry, and smoked a meerschaum pipe that he declared used to belong to the step grand nephew-in-law of Thomas Jefferson. And to hear that man talk, Jeffersonian democracy was an inspiration. One morning when he was unusually eloquent along this line his wife looked up and asked him if democracy didn't mean free and equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

He knocked the ashes from the meerschaum and shook his head disapprovingly. A woman's place, he said, with great condescension, was to keep the home and she had no business dabbling in politics. Mrs. Leighton was tired that morning so she answered the aristocrat by saying that she thought it was much more suitable for a woman to dabble in politics than in a wash tub. Margaret noticed that the feature of those glorious old days most frequently mentioned by her father was the big sideboard on which he said always stood bottles of wine, and Bourbon whisky brought from Kentucky—Kentucky, where the "corn is full of kernels and the colonels full of corn." The sideboard was the last relic to which they clung and when at last one day, the big oak sideboard had to be sold the father managed to keep—though the children needed food and clothes—the cut glass decanters and wicker covered demijohns. They were full one day—he was next. That was the only way he had of showing he was brought up a gentleman.

Where Margaret went to school, the teacher one day gave out the word "gentleman" for the class to define, and poor little Margaret wrote this: "A gentleman is a man who does nothing but talk and

get drunk." Years went by and the glass decanters had to be sold—John Leighton was his own demijohn. Periodical sprees were now the only relic he had left whereby he could prove to the world he was a born aristocrat. How Margaret hated those words, ancestry and aristocracy! She began to believe that when people's only claim to respectability is that they have descended from great ancestry, the decent has been as emphatic as sliding down hill, and the word aristocracy sounded like ipecac to her.

During her father's periodical sprees, he became more and more dangerous, and one day when he came home with his brain on fire, and the baby brother was sitting at the head of a long flight of stairs, the drunken aristocrat pushed the child with his foot, and the baby fell backward over a chair placed to prevent it going down the stairs.

As the slow, sad years went by, a wistful-eyed, queer little hunchback boy lived to bear daily testimony that his father was brought up a gentleman, with wine on the sideboard—and the rest.

Then there came a day when the man whose father owned plantations could use only six-feet of earth—the same day that comes to Vanderbilts and Astors. They sold the old home for a song, went to Texas to live with a relative, to work and do their best.

Then the mother soon passed away, and only Margaret and the little hunchback were left.

When Will Mather, an awkward country boy, after fruitless efforts finally managed to tell Margaret he loved her, she, with the proper amount of hesitation, accepted him on the spot. He wasn't very

handsome, or very scholarly, but he could work, and he made no pretentions of being an aristocrat. Best of all, he owned a little farm, where they could grow cotton for their livelihood. So they were married and Margaret set herself with her whole heart to make a home for the man. Her relatives had told her that Will Mather was a good man—would take his toddy now and then—but that gave her no concern. She had never been associated with a man who did not drink more or less—she considered it the natural condition of men.

He put in his crops season after season, and things went fairly well, though the cost of living made it impossible for them to lay anything aside, and as the man grew older, the drinking more or less changed to drinking more. Children came, and at last the season when the women and children decided to go into the cotton patch, and pick the cotton themselves.

They worked hard, laughing bravely over their cotton sacks, and at last it was all picked, ginned, baled, ready for tomorrow's market, and the little family sat down to rest. What joyous plans for tomorrow! The oldest son was too grave and dignified for such rejoicing, but little Bill and Tom whispered on their pallet about new hats, and even dared to mention a new knife between them, little Bill to have it in the morning, Tom from then until night.

Mary pleaded for a new ribbon for her hair. The mother smiled and patted the baby at her breast. Maybe, if enough were left after she bought the baby's shoes, Mary was to have a new dress and hat. Wouldn't the ribbon from the old hat do—

No? Well, they should see—Mary had worked hard in the broiling sun, her arms were nearly blistered—never mind—they'd see.

At last they were told by the mother to go to sleep, for they must be off by sunrise. And the man and wife sat alone and talked of the outlay on the morrow. When Will Mather looked at his wife's tired face, he leaned over suddenly and kissed her. She blushed like a girl. He had not kissed her in a long time—not since the baby had scarlet fever, took a turn for the better and the doctor said he would get well. Standing out there under the stars the man had put his arm about his wife and told her that if it had not been for her nursing the baby would not have come around, and he said he was going to be a better man. So tonight she went to rest the happier for the kiss, but lay awake long trying to plan how to make one dollar do the work of two. At sunrise they started, the man on the big cotton wagon, the family following in a spring wagon, still chattering about their new things they would buy.

In town the mother and children went to a big department store where she was to buy their clothes. Tom was to try on a beautiful new suit, and so on, the father was to go and sell the cotton and they would have their usual meeting place—in a little park where they would spread their lunch—and oh, such a time they would have! What did blistered hands and scorched faces matter now?

Carefully Margaret made her purchases—trying to please the little ones, and still remember that sum to be laid by for school. Then telling the salesman to have the goods wrapped, she added that they

would call and pay for them on their return home, after the cotton was sold.

Then they went to the park as happy as birds and scattered over the grass. One o'clock; John was late. Margaret spoke cheerily—maybe the man who bought the cotton was delayed. Two o'clock came; into the daughter's eyes there crept a shadow of fear. But the children were hungry, so with trembling fingers Margaret spread the lunch. She could not eat. Three o'clock—four.

Then the oldest son went to search. A hand of ice gripped the woman's heart. It was nearly dusk when he came back and told her the story, bit by bit, as tenderly as he could. His father was out there in the wagon ready to go home. He had found him drunk. Some one had told him how, after selling his cotton the man had gone into a near-by saloon, two old boon companions following—a treat, another, a frenzied brain, a man lending, giving away money—then lurching out, after hours to find his team, his pockets gaping wide, and there he was—all his money gone but a few paltry dollars—lost, given away or stolen—no matter. There he was, ready to go home.

If you should want a logical argument against the saloon, I ask you to look at that woman's and those children's faces as they drive homeward through the dusk. Is this tragedy a bit of fiction written by a dreaming poet? Is it not a real story—a true story? Is it overdrawn? Are not the details scanty compared to every day life? Is it a rare story? Does it happen a thousand times over every year? What then? Did simply whisky cause this tragedy? Whisky that is bought from bootleggers, as they call it? No; whisky

as presented in the saloon—the saloon with all its surroundings, peculiar conditions, companionship, so called sociability. The open, ready, ever present, sociable saloon then is the cause, every year, of the ruin of thousands of Texas homes. What, then? The men should be stronger, they should resist the temptation? If they were, there wouldn't be any saloons, would there? He was a weak man with an opportunity convenient for his weakness.

The next day Margaret set her lips, lifted her head and began to think of her pedigree. Blood will count in emergencies like this. She was a direct descendant of William Henry Harrison. She faced the fact that the man she had taken to protect her, guide her, or even to control her, was the weaker of the two, and it was a pitiful realization. They weathered through the winter some way, but the oldest son, Tom, fretted sorely because he had to give up the promised schooling, and he was always lifting his face from the plow handles with that look of a caged creature trying to fly. He hadn't lived through the town, you see, to learn to love the farm. It takes the cries of the market-place, the tussel of the highway to make the waterfall and bird songs meaningful. You needn't expect a boy, born on a farm, to want to stay there, especially when the smoke of a city is in sight. You may preach all day long about the vices and temptations of the town, but he is going to find out for himself. Margaret knew this and a certain thought made her shudder.

She knew that her boy might have from both sides of the family an inherited appetite for whisky. She knew how much

more powerful an inherited tendency, an ever present temptation is than an acquired habit. This woman was beginning to have convictions along this line and to speak them. Hitherto she had accepted the saloon as a necessary part of civic conditions. She began to resent its existence as unfair, unjust. She began to realize that the people who say the saloon must go are not the fanatics. The fanatics talk the other way. That treacherous institution with its foaming mouth would always be calling to her beloved—and she wanted it taken away.

She began to talk to her husband in a new way. Margaret hardly knew herself about legislation against the evil and all that. The man told her that there was no chance to stop the sale of it. Should they close the places, it would be sold in every fish market, in every grocery store; but he would always add humbly that he hoped his boy would be a stronger man than he had been, and be able to pass the temptation by.

A simpler thing it would be to take the temptation away, the mother made answer, and she fell to wondering if a rattlesnake were coiled on the square and had the habit of staying in one place, would they let it stay merely that people might learn to keep out of its reach? Would they have a great pit in the school yard and cover the mouth with flowers, that would lure the children to pick them to teach them to be strong enough to stay away? How many would be lost in learning the lesson?

Margaret was glad when a chance came for her boy to enter the navy—the Spanish-American war was on—and new sights, new sounds might help to take his mind

away from the dreaded temptation. When the boy left, his mother made no pretense of teaching him that he should serve his country, for to tell the truth she was losing faith in Uncle Sam.

The cotton patch lost one of its best hands, and two people there were, who well knew that glasses of whisky held across a bar were sending their boy on a battleship instead of into college walls. The mother mourned for her boy, the father drank more heavily.

One night Will Mather was shot and killed instantly in a drunken brawl in the rear of a saloon. After the first shock from the gushing wound and blank face, Margaret knew that her way would be easier. She could work now and at least know where the proceeds of her work would go. Then a drouth came and in spite of the two women, two small children and the hunchback's farm labor, the sky was as brass, the crop parched in uselessness, the little farm was mortgaged.

About this time a young woman, an acquaintance in the city, who came out for a visit, pitied Mary for her rough work and told them of what a fine position she had—then of a business college with its lightning methods of stenography and its guarantee of a sixty-dollar position at the start. Wouldn't Mary rather try that? Sixty dollars a month sounded like a fortune to Margaret, who heaved a quick, eager sigh. But again her pedigree protest sounded in her soul. It was rough work, but it was home work, and that was best. Those proud old Virginia women, white handed, silk robed dames, sheltered from winds, called down the generations and stood between little Mary of the cotton patch and the outside world.

But the mortgage, the sick child, the drouth and Mary's pleading—so not long after, another farm hand was gone. When Mary's position was secured, her mother went with her to see her employer, a brilliant lawyer, whose name meant wealth and power. In a halting, tearful fashion, Margaret begged the man to take care of her little girl, and he promised her that he would. The mother, stifling the sobs in her throat, went away, leaving her Mary, clear-eyed, white-browed, clean-souled, in whose hands? In the guardianship of a man whose nature had been calloused and seared, who for years had rendered a class of legal service which was mere jugglery in court, who had used the law to defeat justice, who had covered facts with technicalities, who for years had defended the guilty at the expense of the innocent, who hundreds of times had played on the emotions of an ignorant jury to secure the verdict that he wished. The man's conscience was dead—slain by dollars. Of late years men said he was losing his powers—he drank, they said, too much. He went into the saloon across the street a dozen times a day. Others said that when he had a drink or two he could handle the jury like wax.

As Margaret went home she passed a saloon and trembled. She never had before. A Salvation Army woman handed her a temperance pamphlet and she read as she walked along slowly. The United States in 1911 spent five times as much money for whiskey as for boots and shoes; two hundred and fifty million more for whisky than for meat; five and a fourth times as much for whisky as for public education. Margaret read these figures with a new interest, but more than all

these to her was the bare fact that whisky had placed her Mary, her lily, by that typewriter upstairs.

People had told her that to close the saloons would deprive the state of its chief revenue, and she wondered if boots and shoes and bread and meat were not better revenue than dirty dollars gained by ruining homes. What does revenue to the state count for, if it doesn't mean bread and meat for the masses? If any traffic takes these away, is it revenue or graft? But then Margaret was just an inexperienced country woman and did not understand.

As time went on little Mary found her employer more and more familiar in his manner, ruder, especially after he came from the saloon across the street. The girl—the lineal descendant of that Virginia dignity—thought these manners were rather the manners of the scullion toward the kitchen maids and clung to the simple ideals she had learned from her mother between the furrows as they planted or hoed their crop. But the man, how he laughed at what he called her primness—jeered now and then at folks a hundred years behind the times, joked about old fashioned mothers, whispered something of love. Oh, love beautiful, how we desecrate thee—and little Mary began to lay aside her old ideals as she laid aside the ribbon on her hair, or the bunch of lilacs she used to bring in from her Sunday's visit home, but she did good work and listened with interest to the many discussions on the liquor traffic in the law office. She often heard her employer say that it was not the use but the abuse of whisky that made fanatics fight it so, that

he himself could drink whisky or he could let it alone.

Mary noticed that never a half a day passed that he would let it alone. He often added: "I drink like a gentleman, and if the other fellow wants to make a hog of himself it is none of my affairs." Mary pondered on that expression, "drinking like a gentleman." She knew that the man was never so coarse, so rude, so familiar, as when he had been for a few moments to the saloon across the street. She wondered if that were drinking like a gentleman. She wondered, too, how much or how little whisky it takes to make a man less a gentleman.



Her employer often said that a dry town was a dead town, that without the saloons the farmers would go somewhere else to sell their cotton so they could get whisky. Mary wondered why, because she had heard them say that with the saloons closed, they could get whisky just as easily and she remembered a day when her father came to town to sell his cotton, where there were saloons and she knew that one day had changed the whole history of her home.

Saloons were a part of the business success of a town—over and over she heard him say, "Take them away and you kill the town."

So she remembered that, and sometime after when her employer asked her to make a list of the attractions of the little city in which they lived, she looked up all statistics on this line and made two hundred lists. She must have them ready, he said, for a crowd of boosters, he called them, that were going down the road to boost the town, to tell at other towns, etc., the wonderful attractions they left. So

faithful little Mary studied hard the business directory and listed the leading industries, as she had been told. Among other things she found the town had thirty-one saloons and this item she gave a conspicuous place on the list, knowing that her employer would want this industry, so necessary to a town's well being, emphasized. The "boosters" surged into the office one day to get the lists and Mary handed them, neat and plain, to her employer, who distributed them. The men glanced at them, and to Mary's surprise, every man, without exception, took out his pencil and drew a line through some item on the list, some laughingly, some sheepishly, some proudly, her employer with a mutter and a scowl. Mary in surprise asked him after they had gone, what mistakes she had made. The man said bluntly a mistake was made from lack of common sense, and little Mary asked innocently if the item "saloons" was a lack of common sense.

I wish, in telling this story, I could say that innocence is the protection of innocence and that weakness is its own shield and buckler in the hands of the strong. But I am trying hard not to be a dreamer, but to tell real things and I must tell you that gradually Mary lost her primness, as the man called it. At last, one day, she did not come to her work; her employer wondered a little, then when the days passed and she did not come back, he passed up the matter lightly and decided that the girl had become a part of the drift-wood in the muddy current of the town.

Out on the little farm a woman's heart broke and Margaret had her Gethsemane. When she came in to see the lawyer to ask

him to help her find her girl, he told her as was true, that he knew nothing of her whereabouts and the only comfort he gave was that he would try to keep a look out for her. After the mother left, the man did know one slight pang of remorse. It was like a bird's high call from adown the marshes. He was mentally uncomfortable for a moment, then went across to the saloon, and the same stuff that had made him less than a man, made him not care what he had done, and then—forget.

In the cotton patch now were left only the woman (the two little boys had died) and the hunchback, always doing what he could. The mortgage would soon foreclose, but she did not care. They planted, hoed, gathered in season. To the woman nothing mattered much.

Then out of the long grass in the evening, out of the twilight's hush, came a voice to her, the voice of the Comforter.

Margaret had never been of a religious nature, but in her desert of desolation she learned to know that God was near. It takes the Deeps and the Darks of life for some of us to catch the radiance of the Infinite. It is only through the cries of sorrow that some of us can catch the music of the still, small voice. Yet, thank God, those of us who have to reach the cross with blood-stained feet can look backward and be thankful for every thorn that pierced the way.

One day Tom came home, a medal on his breast, and the mortgage did not matter then. And still the woman prayed and waited. Then one evening at nightfall a swift footed, sad eyed young woman—a young woman who had simply been strong enough to tear herself away from unhallowed influences, came across the

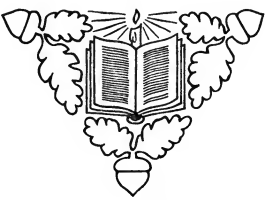
new plowed field, slipped up to the kitchen door, stealing in to nestle in her mother's arms. Mary had come back to the cotton patch.

Then the family knelt together under the stars, and prayed, and the little hunchback bowing his maimed body close to the earth, plead softly, "Oh, God, make whisky let people alone."

This is the prayer that the women of Texas pray, and I do not believe that the men of Texas will make that prayer in vain. On the 21st day of April, 1836, the men of Texas fought for the women of Texas against their Mexican enemies and scattered them like chaff. I do not believe that seventy-seven years later the men of Texas will line up with every Mexican in Texas against the women of our state. I do not believe you will cast this shadow on the glory of the field at San Jacinto.

You have not forgotten that incident during the Spanish-American war which illustrated the military rule, that an official of one country firing upon the flag of another is equal to a declaration of war. You remember that an American soldier was condemned to be shot for some trivial offense. The American consul begged a respite until he could secure necessary papers from the United States, but was refused, and the American with three Mexicans was marched out in the gray of early morning to die. The consul asked permission to pay a last tribute to his countryman; this being granted, he drew from under his long cloak the flag of the United States, shook out its folds until it flashed in the sun's first ray, stepped across the field, wrapped his countryman in his flag from head to foot, then turn-

ing to the Mexican official, said calmly, "Shoot, if you dare!" and the Mexican's arm fell nerveless at his side. Ah, men of Texas, do you remember that ninety per cent of the saloons of Texas—the enemies of our homes—are kept by foreigners? Do not we women thus face a foreign foe? Then, by the eternal glory of chivalry, I ask you to protect the ballotless women of Texas with the voice of our government, to wrap them from head to foot in our Stars and Stripes, thus saying to our foreign enemy, "Shoot, if you dare."



# A Tribute to Lee

(By Narnie Harrison Bell.)

How sweet it is, how sweet it is,
That through all stress and strife,
As we grow old, our hearts may hold
The poetry of life.
Though steps are slow and hearts beat low
And forms with age are bent,
You men in gray, claim still today
Your wealth of sentiment.

As you live on, you still love on,
Your old ideals still are dear.
The morning glories may be gone,
But evening's primrose blossoms here.
Our heroes dead, are heroes still,
The grand old past stirs you and me,
Our hearts beat quick, our pulses thrill,
At the very name of Robert Lee.

And as weak words and wavering lines
Do ill befit our Lee,
I look to wailing southern pines
And bid them speak for me;
I ask the gulf that laps our beach,
With seething sob and swell,
To lend its syllables to teach
Of him we loved so well.

I ask the Texas mocking bird,
With liquid minstrelsy,
To lend one note, from its full throat
To help me sing of Lee!
I ask our Texas prairie flowers
To write in words of flame,
That glorious deeds and splendid hours,
Illuminate his name.

For our Southland, with mountains grand,
And peaceful valleys sweet;
With rock-ribbed hills and gentle rills
That laugh about their feet.
With storm-lit skies, and azure dyes
Still nooks, and prairies free—
These in their tenderness and strength—
Express the soul of Lee.

Whether we view him at Fredericksburg,
When victory blazed his path;
Or at Gettysburg with its struggle fierce,
And terrible aftermath.
Whether in leading retreating host,
Or whether advancing van—
With all his courage and his power
He was a gentle, loving man.

He met defeat, but years repeat
The glory of his fame;
His flag went down, but the laurel crown
Still rests upon his name.
O name so fair, O fame so rare—
You help all men to see,
That the noble heart, which bears its part
Meets always—victory!

In Lee's dear name, in Lee's clear fame,
May we this lesson trace:
A lost cause is not honor gone,
Defeat is not disgrace.
Come grief, come joy, as seasons roll,
Be the days dark or bright,
Keep we the brave, untarnished soul,
And we have won the fgiht.