

AN NEGRO LOVE SONG.

BY "UNCLE REMUS."

Track in de paw' whar rabbit bin playin'... (Hey, my Lily! go down de road!)... (Hi, my Lily! go down de road!)...

WHERE SHE WAS.

[Rose Terry Cooke in Youth's Companion.] "I don't care!" "Well, I don't care!" "And they have been just six weeks married, these two!"...

It was like a new life to her to get out into the sweet country, but she knew nothing at all about farm work and cared less; it was all new to her, and at first was very hard.

Then she had a quick temper and a quick tongue, and Will was the only son of a widow and had always had his own way.

His mother was dead when he married Sally, or he could not have brought a wife home to the lonely farm, for it would not support three people as yet, though Will worked hard to make it pay; and the year before he had received an orphan's home from a railroad company for the right to run their road straight through his front yard.

This seemed a fortune to Will, and he thought very little of the road being only a few rods from his door, in comparison with the money which enabled him to buy a wood-lot bordering on his farm and a piece of meadow on the other side.

But when Sally came there she complained a good deal of the noise the engine made, and scolded to think the wagon never could come up to the door; for she was afraid to cross the track in it, and the barn lay on the other side of both road and railway.

However a thing that can't be cured must be endured, so she set herself to the endurance. But butter-making and cooking were worse troubles to her, and to-day Will had grumbled at the specks in the butter, and pushed his plate away at breakfast because the buckwheat cakes were so hard.

How she wished that she had had a home and a mother to teach her home duties, instead of being an orphan, and that she could remember and working so many years in a factory.

and spun out of sight round a sharp curve. She remembered that she must go out to the barn and gather the eggs as she always did about that time—she was so afraid to cross the road unless a train had just passed.

She did not put on her hood, for the day was so bright—and her head was so hot with anger and crying that the cool air was refreshing—but ran across hastily; there were plenty of eggs to do, but she had no basket.

"That's a little too much," she said to herself. "I ain't a'goin' to do his chores for him, anyway! I've got enough to do in the house, and don't suit nister at that. If he thinks he's got a dumb slave to work for him, he'll feel 'em, but I'm bound I won't clean 'em, so there!" and looking over again with fresh wrath she left the barn and slammed the door behind her.

Meantime Will went on his way to Mystic, where he arrived due time, did his errands and went to Uncle Dan's, where he found a good and abundant dinner; and a plentiful meal of chicken pot-pie, mashed potato, boiled turnips, new fry bread and baked Indian pudding put him into excellent humor, so that when "Phrony, who had been a bit for I begun kinder faintin' my breakfast, and I guess I made her mad; shouldn't wonder!"

"Why, she's well, real well; but she's got kinder put out with me this morning, and I don't know her a bit, for I begun kinder faintin' my breakfast, and I guess I made her mad; shouldn't wonder!"

"Why, Will!" said "Phrony, with an accent of reproach that said more than her words. "I would bestrange if she did know about housework to once," said mild Aunt Gals; "she never had no mother nor no folks so's she could learn; be sort o' softly to her, W; she's a lonesome little critter, but she's not but you to hold on to yo, know."

Will's really kind heart began to trouble him; he went out again into the street ostensibly to finish his errands, but really to buy Sally a rose-pink silk tie that would look so pretty in contrast with her rich dark hair and eyes, and perhaps cast a glance at her too pale, smooth cheek.

For Will had an instinct of taste in his uneducated nature, and knew very well pretty and refined-looking his wife was even beside "Phrony's less delicate and more blinding beauty."

So he stepped into the sleigh and drove off, thinking how he would "make friends" with Sally, and how that dimple in her cheek would come and go, and her lovely eyes brighter than the stars in the pink tie.

The road seemed very long, for he knew he had left home in a passion, and now he was sorry. He got there at last, just before sun-down, and driving into the barn was received with a chorus from cow and pig, and the chickens, and the sheep, and the crickets this morning! "I did lose my head, that's a fact. Well I've got to tend to 'em now. Wonder Sally didn't. Maybe, though, she didn't come over, or if she did she fished the eggs and didn't look at nothing else."

Very speedily he fed the hungry beasts and put out his horse resolving to go in to supper and finish his barn-work afterwards, for he was hungry.

cept those of Will's old horse and the two men. Sally's light feet had not traversed that yielding surface; nobody had been there. Then Will broke down; wind and food or sleep, oppressed by the awful mystery of his loss, as well as by the lost itself, he grew half-crazy, sobbed, raved and tramped the house, till Royal Phelps at last went over to fetch his wife, with the sage remark: "He's past handling; I guess women-folks'd know better how to fetch him to now."

So Mrs. Phelps came over, made some hot coffee and persuaded him to drink it, set things to rights and prepared to get dinner, but Will still lay on his face in the bedroom, as wretched and hopeless as a man could be.

Suddenly a horse's hoofs beat on the crusted snow up to the back door. Will jumped up and rushed out, and a man handed him a telegram; he did not read it, while he was opening it, the bearer's explanation.

It came to Taunton deppert for ye, and ye operator said "yes real important, an' you'd better get a dollar to fetch it." Will did not answer; his brain reeled as he read: "William Gray, Taunton. Your wife is at Seay's Station very ill."

"Can I go back to Taunton with you?" he said to the man, handing the telegram to Mrs. Phelps, with a light in his eye that told the relief he was scarcely conscious of as yet.

"Reckon you kin, for another dollar," and with a nod to the astonished Mrs. Phelps, Will was off, and in an hour was seated in the train for Seay's Station.

The story is strange but true; when Sally slammed the barn-door behind her she pulled her apron over her head, and ran across the road, safe in the knowledge that the morning express had passed. The light fall of snow dulled the sound of a special freight-train slowly rounding the corner just at that moment, and Sally was struck by the cow-bell as she stepped on the track, and was thrown violently to one side.

Stunned by the blow, she lay on the ground unconscious. She did not know that the train had stopped, or that she was surrounded by a group of strange men.

The engineer and one of the brakemen entered the house and did it deserted. No other dwelling was in sight.

To leave a woman lying insensible in an empty house was out of the question, and so at last, after calling in vain for assistance, they laid her in the conductor's car to carry her to the nearest station, some miles further on.

When she regained her consciousness, it was her turn to feel all the questions, and regret and repentence that Will suffered, and to make resolve of her own, if ever she returned to live up to them.



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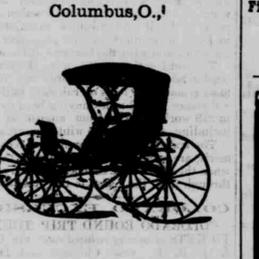
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