SWEET SEPTEMBER.

How bright the days are!
The solar rays are
No more oppressive, the nights are mild,
And clear the skies are,
And gay the days are
In the maple grove and the woodland wild.

Schoolma'am and master,
Layman and pastor
Are back from the mountain and ocean's shore,
Robust and healthy
(Although less wealthy),
And down to labor have bent once more.

The shore's deserted
Where couples flirted,
And the youth no more 'neath the starlight pale
His love confesses
And the bathing dresses
No longer flap in the noonday gale.

The crops that weathered
The rain are gathered;
The grapes are ripe on the burdened vine;
The yacht moored fast is;
And almost past is
The summer of eighteen eighty-nine.

—*Boston Courier.*

LUKE JUDKIN'S CHEERFUL END.

AN EAST VILLAGE STORY.

"Tough? He's all made o' whip-cord, I tell ye. Last? O' course he'll last. Ain't he over ninety a'ready? Smart? See'm out there now a-playin' croky—he an' Henery Green! Henery is a babe as compared with Luke, an' Henery is over seventy-five. Ye'll never open the new cemtery with Luke, I tell ye. 'Tain't no use waitin'."

The undertaker moved a quid of tobacco slowly from one side of his long lantern jaw to the other as he replied, dubiously, "The new cimetery folks say thet the folks to East Village ain't respondin' as they hed ought to the new enterprise."

"Wall, they hedn't ought to cal'late on old Luke, anyhow."

The speakers sat on the steps of Enoch Johnson's store in East Village, and looked across the green to where two old men were playing croquet—a game not yet extinct in the mountain farming districts of Vermont. Pretty soon a quarrel seemed to spring up between the players; loud words rang out under the elms, then came a fierce interchange of blows. The undertaker and Enoch Johnson stood up on the store steps to watch the contest at better advantage. Presently Enoch said, as if apostrophizing: "Thet Luke Judkin's the consarndest, cussedest, peskiest old critter! Henery is hurted, an' here comes Luke with a broken mallet. Shouldn't wonder ef he'd say Henry was all to blame. Spry? Ain't he spry! D'ye ever hear about his dog? He's cuter than old Luke himself. Here the old reskill comes. H'lo, Luke!"

"H'lo, Enoch! How's folks?"

Luke Judkin briskly walked up to the store, holding the parts of a broken mallet handle in his hands. He was a picture of that agile, athletic old age which so often obtains at the present day among the "hill farms" in Vermont. His nose and chin betrayed a ludicrous intimacy. His back was bent with the weight of years. His hands had grown into long, unsightly claws. The day was hot, and it was mid-day, but the sun at 110 degrees only sufficed to pleasantly warm the bald head of the old man, whose sharp little eyes in their cavernous sockets gleamed up at the storekeeper in keen recognition.

"Been a-playin' croky?" answered Enoch, not replying, according to East Village etiquette, to the old man's inquiry concerning his "folks."

"Yes; beat Henery Green three games runnin'," said Luke. "Would'a beat the forth, only Henery, he said I cheated. 'Tw'an't no sich a thing!" and his eyes blinked savagely, like the eyeballs of an antiquated parrot. "I didn't cheat no more 'n' no less than he did."

"Come to blows, eh?"

"Yes. 'Twa'n't nothin'. Struck our mallets together a leetle. Say, Enoch, measure me out a cent's wuth o' glue—Henry broke my handle."

"I'd like to see the cent," drawled Enoch, slowly rising and slowly meandering in the store for the glue.

Luke took a seat on the steps, near the undertaker, and proceeded to wipe his perspiring face with his shirt sleeve. The undertaker looked him over professionally a moment; then said, musingly: "Luke, what is your measure? Five foot seven an' a harf, or five foot eight an' a harf?" He put the question casually, as if not personally interested.

"Mr. Stapples, you got money in thet new cem'tery enterprise, 'ain't ye?"

Mr. Stapples allowed he had—"a few hunderd."

"Waal, 'tain't nothin' to you what I measure. I cal'late I ken tire out any cem'tery enterprise as has started to East Village, an' when I deeeease I purpose bein' buried to Weston."

"Sho!" Mr. Stapples leaned over and picked up a straw, to conceal his feeling of disappointment and vexation.

"I'm agin all them new-fangled patent iron monuments an' iron fixin's, an agin' all this 'ere flummery folks is talkin' about. The old-fashioned marble headstuns is plenty good 'nuff. Ther's altogether too much fancy fixin' to the new cem'tery. I'm agin fountain play into a cem'tery—yes I be! an' ef the old berryin'-ground's full, as they say, I'm a-goin' to Weston."

"Sho!" again ejaculated the undertaker, in an undertone. "Shouldn't think you'd like to make yourself so unpopular."

"What's folks to East Village ever done for me? I ain't a-goin' to do nothin' for them—no I ain't."

"We hed hoped," urged the undertaker, "that you'd open our new cimetery, an' we cal-lated t' have the Weston band."

"'Tain't no use arguf yin'!" said Luke, stubbornly.

"A band, an' a adress by the Methodist an' Presbyterin ministers," softly smiled Mr. Stapples.

Luke moved uneasily on the step.

"A adress makin' mention of your noble carrickter, an' praisin' of it, an' makin' out as how you were a great philanthropeed," smiled Mr. Stapples, affably.

"A what is't?" asked Luke, quickly turning his sharp, discrediting eyes full upon the undertaker.

"A phi-lanthropeed—I cal'late one what is a sorter magnit."

Old Luke began to chuckle well within himself. "M' a magnit'n East Village!" he grinned. "Why, I can't get trusted fer a bag o' oats!"

Enoch came out with the glue done up in a bit of brown paper. "Guess ye hurted Henery, ye old sinner," said he, looking across the green. "There's Marier a-doin' his head up in a hankshe. Look's though his skull was cracked—darn me ef't don't!"

"Hope 'tis," said Luke. "He'd no bigness to say I cheated. Why, croky ain't no fun onless ye cheat some; an' Henery, he's wuss'n I be."

"Waal," said Enoch, slowly, "folks know yeou! an' I guess Henery's most wise in the right. Say, Luke, here's the glue; now where's the cent?"

Old Luke felt about in his breeches pockets for some moments, apparently to no purpose. Then he felt in his boot-top and pulled out a dirty and much-mangled five-dollar bill.

"Here, Enoch; give me four doller an' ninety-nine cents change"—and Luke handed up the bill.

Enoch laughed a sickly laugh. "Yeou know I hain't got the change," he said; "but I'll cabbage onto this bill, an' yeou can let it go agin our akount—thet there forty-nine doller an' eighty-six cents fer store prodjuce as has stood fer—let's see—three year an' over."

Luke quickly thrust the bill into his trousers pocket. "I call ye to witness, Mr. Stapples, I tendered the cash. Yes, I did; an' now, Enoch, le's have the glue."

"Le's hev the bill, Luke. Guess I ken get the change up to the savin's bank."

Luke shook his head.

"No bill, no glue," insisted Enoch.

"Waal, no glue, no cent!" replied Luke, savagely.

"Sho! at yer old games, ain't ye!" said Enoch; and he sheepishly handed over the glue and walked back into the store, while Luke Judkin grinned.

"Luke's got ye, Enoch. I see 'im tender the cash," said the undertaker.

Enoch stood in the doorway, shuffled his feet a little, and looked foolish.

"He allus do get the better o' most," said Enoch. "But some day, mark my word, Luke 'll get fetched up short. Some un will take an' thrash him; and tough as he is, he'll wish he was a darn sight tougher, then."

Luke said nothing. Placing the glue in his breeches pocket, he walked rapidly across the green toward his barn.

"He's smart," ejaculated the undertaker, "an' no mistake; but I cal'late the new cimetery's smarter'n him. It ken wait longer'n he ken, an' he knows it. I cal'late I did them folks a good turn when I put in a word about the brass band an' the oration. Luke kinder pricked up his ears, I see."

Enoch shook his head. "No; he'll beat you folks yet," he said. "He'll trick ye some way." Shading his eyes with his hand, Enoch looked down the road. "Darn me ef his dorg 'ain't come back home agin! Ther's one smarter'n Luke to East Village. 'Tain't no man; it's a dorg! Yas, Luke's cute, but his dorg—he's cuter'n Luke. But both on 'em are a pair. Land! see thet dorg sneak home, hidin' behint thet hedge, knowin', sure as guns, he's bin sold agin fer five dollar—the bill ye see Luke hev—an' comin' home fer to be sold agin! Why, Luke's made forty dollars outen thet p'inter inside o' three months, to my sartin knowledge."

The undertaker laughed. "Make money outen a dorg? No! G'way!"

"Yep."

"The same dorg?"

"Yep. I see 'm sell the p'inter yestiddy to Hank Spink. Hank's a feller as won't stand no nonsense neither. Hank druv off with the dorg in his buggy, him a-lookin' kinder' knowin' at old Luke, an' a-waggin' of ez tail ez tho' he knowed what to do without bein' told. Now he's back, an' Luke'll try an' sell 'm agin to some fool afore the week's out."

"I swan! Thet's cheatin'."

"Cheatin'? Luke'd cheat the store teeth outen his gran'ther. Why, he's the cuss they renegaded into the war fer palmin' off shoe-pegs on government hosses fer oats. An' ye ought to hear him brag o' them war times! I shouldered a gun, but he never saw Dixie's land 'cept as a sutler, an' now he's a livin' off a pension as he got because he claimed he was injured in the Wilderness, bein' throwed heavy in a wrastlin' match—he war allus wrastlin'—and spraining a shoulder-blade, which he gets five dollars a month for ever sence. Perhaps thet five-dollar bill was dorg money; perhaps it was guv'ment money; guess likely dorg money—I dun know."

"Pour me out a gallon o' molasses," said the undertaker, as he rose to go. "Guess ef Luke's a reskill we don't want ter open our new cimetery with no such carrickter. We'd better be lookin' around fer a corpse as we ken praise up without lyin' about. Sho! The village is so dern healthy, an' we've waited an' waited, an spent our money;" and the undertaker heaved a deep sigh.

"Waal, better look fer another corpse as ain't a reskill, an' hasn't sold a dorg over a dozen times," laughed Enoch, as the molasses slowly drained from the hogshead into the undertaker's jug. "Luke would spile any cemetery. Guess folks to Weston won't thank Luke much fer his choosin'. Guess likely he'll be forced to try the new enterprise after all."

An empty farm wagon drove by in the dusty road, making a great clatter, and obscuring Luke's house and barn across the green in a cloud of dust.

When the dust rose and they could see beneath it, Luke could be seen leading his pointer into the barn. He seemed to be in somewhat of a hurry, and the dog proving unwilling, he led the animal quickly back into the house. At the same moment a horseman rode furiously up to the store, threw himself off his horse, and shouted to Enoch, who stood on his doorstep, scarcely ten feet away: "H'lo, Enoch! Seen anything of my p'inter I bought o' Luke Judkin fer five dollars?"

"Cheap dorg!" grinned Enoch, in reply.

"Bought 'im last Thursday, an' here 'tis Tuesday, an' the dorg run off. I suspect Luke's got him back. Ef the consarned reskill has gone an' done me, I'll—I'll—" The speaker, a tall, thin, athletic young farmer, gave a quick swing to his arm as he spoke, indicative of the punishment he would inflict upon old Luke Judkin if found delinquent.

"Hank Spink, you'd orter know better'n to try an' buy thet dorg. Menny hez tried it," said Enoch, "an' not one on em's ever hed much success. You carrn't buy thet dorg, Hank; you carrn't do it! The dorg's too smart. Yes, I see thet dorg not a few minnits ago. Guess he's to Luke's barn now."

"Well, I guess I boughten the dorg; an' I'll hev the dorg, or I'll hev the law onto Luke!"

The undertaker smiled. "Mebbe as you ken arrest a dorg!" he said. "As for Luke, he 'ain't done nuthin'; it's the dorg's fault."

Hank Spink scratched his head. "I ain't no lawyer shark, but guess I know 'nuff to know thet dorg's boughten an' paid for; an' he's my dorg, an' I'll get 'im outen Luke's barn, or Luke gets a lickin', one or t'other!" said Hank, angrily, striding across the green toward Luke Judkin's white house and dingy gray barn.

The others followed. Enoch was altogether too much interested in the event of the "dorg" tendin' his store. Perceiving his departure, half a dozen young urchins, strolling homeward from a bath and swim in a neighboring stream, stole into the store and slyly helped themselves to "Jackson balls" and 'lasses cakes in the window. Not content with these sweets, they daubed their faces with flour, and arrayed themselves in the yellow tarpaulin suits which hung over the counter.

But if the urchins were having a good time, the ill-concealed look of amusement in honest Enoch's face as he crossed the green also showed that he too was enjoying himself, perhaps equally well. "I'd like to see how Hank'll go to work," he laughed. "Hank's mad, an' Luke ain't no match for him in a bare stand-up fight. But Luke's tricky. Hank'll never git the dorg! You see, Mr. Stapples, it'll take a sheriff an' a posse to fetch the dog away—an' I was a-goin' to say, a hull jedge an' jury to hold 'im! Luke is game, he is. Guess he's got the dog hid away by this time. Sho! here he comes! Now what's he a-doin'?"

Enoch's genuine admiration for old Luke's shrewdness found vent a moment later in a hearty slap upon his thigh. Luke advanced toward Hank Spink with hearty treble "How-ter-doo?" and a handshake which, by its warmth of feeling, quickly disarmed the stalwart young farmer. "So—ye forgot to tie the dorg up, did ye? Waal, he's come home. Yes, he has. Hank, ye didn't feed him 'nuff vittles. Marier, she used to feed him too much, and the dorg, he likes vittles; so he's run off, I s'pose."

"Yes, I come arfter the dorg," Mr. Judkin," said Hank Spink, mollified.

The old man's thin hair was brushed and combed up back over his ears. No rural saint could ever have looked meeker and milder than Luke in his clean linen duster, his collarless shirt and his greased boots.

"Waal, he's high an' low 'bout the yard some'eres, Hank. I see 'im chasin' 'bout like's though he was glad to get back an' get vittles agin. Hi, Snapper! Snap! Don't see 'im now 'zactly."

Old Luke gazed about the yard and at the house furtively, as if he expected the dog to look out at him from a second story window and wink. But Snap made no appearance at a window or elsewhere, and Hank Spink shoved his lean hands far down in his breeches pockets, with:

"Look a-here, Luke; I ain't a-goin' to stand no foolin'. I want thet dorg. I paid fer him fair, an' I do admit he was a dern cheap dorg fer the price."

"Well, tarnation! Ketch the dorg an' take 'm away. I ain't got nothin' to do with the dorg. The dog's your'n; take 'm away of he's here," replied Luke's high treble.

"Waal, he's here, I guess, ef he ain't hid," said Hank, inconsequently. "Come, now, fetch him out!"

At the same moment the door opened and a round chubby woman, with very black bead-like eyes and little black ringlets, appeared. She only stood in the open doorway long enough to make up a face at the strange men in the dooryard, exclaim, "Land!" and retire again within the house, as if provoked beyond all desire for further discovery.

"Marier's mad's a hornit, already," laughed Enoch, *sotto voce*, to the undertaker; "an' see them men trackin' up her clean floor!"

Hang Spink had entered the porch at the side of the house, and Luke had followed him. They walked the length of the porch, which had been freshly cleaned that morning, and Hank placed his hand on the latch of the door, when old Luke placed his hand on him.

"'Tain't no use goin' in an' upsettin' everything in this house on 'count of a dorg."

"Leggo me!" answered Hank. "I'm a-goin' to hev thet dorg, an' I cal'late no one ain't goin' to stop me!"

Luke placed himself before the door.

"I'm a-goin' to stop any man openin' my door an' enterin' my house without a search warrint. Yes, I be!"

"Oh, you be, be ye?" And Hank gave the old man a thrust aside. They glared at each other. There was a little sparring for a "side hold," when, quick as a flash, the old man threw Hank over his shoulder, landing him a good twelve paces on the grass. As Hank lay there sprawling on the turf, Luke, pale with his effort and with anger, shook his fist over his prostrate foe.

"You'll never git thet dorg, Hank, onless ye ken wrastle better'n thet!" Then he put his hand suddenly to his heart. "God A'mighty!" he exclaimed, in a hoarse whisper, as Enoch ran forward. "Somepen's broke inside! Run an' fetch Marier! Some one go for the doctor! I'm—I'm—I'm— He kin hev his dorg."

The old man sank to the floor of the porch, and rolled over on one side, a ghastly whiteness spreading over his face.

"He's dead—dead as a nit!" cried Enoch, aghast.

"No, he ain't," said the undertaker, kneeling by his side. "He's only fainted. Hunk, you run fer the doctor. Mebbe ir's a murder case. Guess ye'd bette kinder let the doctor know, Hank, an' then yeou lite out, an' keep hid away. I'll testify 'twant your fault bein' throwed thet way, but yeou hed orter got a sarch-warrint—yes yeou hed!"

Hank took the hint and went out of the yard, much crestfallen and quaking with fear. Although he fancied he heard a dog's whine come out to him from the house, he did not stop to look back nor attempt to whistle after him, the fatal cause of all his trouble that day. He left word with the doctor and galloped back to his little hill farm on the mountainside, a sadder and a wiser, if a dogless, man.

The doctor worked over Luke for an hour. Aunt Marier, with a scared look, made gruel and poultices, for which there could be no possible use; but, on being so informed, only made more gruel and more poultices, as if by way of proving herself useful in an emergency, if for no other reason.

Luke Judkin "came round." After a week he was out again, the hard, knotty old fellow. But he was not the same man he was. "'Pears like I hain't got long fer to live," he said, with a melancholy whine. "My innards ain't right. 'Pears my orgins is twisted inside."

But however great the changes wrought by his last "wrastle" on Luke's body and insides, his mental change and moral regeneration were something astonishing.

"He ain't the same cuss," said Enoch, as he sat on his threshold, two weeks later, with one or two farmers, and glanced across the green. "He's sorter meachin' an' wilted down—no spunk left! Land! he as uster be kinder feelin' round ter do somethin' mean ter his neighbors, and make 'em feel mean ter him, why, he's turned right round! Guess he won't live long. No! Folks says he's paid up all his debts. Waal, he's paid my 'count—every cent, an' he went an' paid fer Marier's—thet's his fourth wife, yeou reklect?—sister's child's schoolin' down to Northfield. An' ez fer thet dorg o' hizen, Hank got him back all right; yes, an' Luke, he's trying fer to act on the square. Why, there's Mr. Stapples a-comin! Dead? Luke Judkin dead? Why, I want ter know! Thet's news! Whew!"

"Yes; died half an hour ago," said the undertaker, who came across the green to the store with a pail for ice. "Passed away peaceful like. Yes, yes, I were on hand; happened so. Luke's dead at last. The strain's what killed him. Yes, looks peaceful an' like a saint."

"I cal'late he's a saint 'nough now," sighed Enoch, with a New Englander's readiness to canonize all deceased persons. "He were wicked at times, were Luke, but mostwise he were so dern smart thet ye hed ter fergiv' 'm. An', waal, what ef he did sell his dorg over a dozen times? Wa'n't it half the dern dorg's fault? Dead? Waal, ye don't say so!"

"It were part the dorg's fault," replied the undertaker; "but ef I stan' here a-talkin', Luke 'll spile, an' all thet there peaceful ind of hizen will go for naught. I never see a corpse look so mild and good-tempered. Most looks sour, Mr. Johnson; but Luke, he smiles away, as of he hed a easy death, kinder passed over the river, as they say, an' larfin' an' smilin' good-by; an' it's jest hit the cimetery folks off right, tew, Mr. Johnson—jest right. Oh, we finished off the roadways jest in time, an' we shell give Luke a big funeril—as big as from seventy-five to one hundred dollars 'll buy; yes."

Luke's was indeed a grand funeral for East Village. There was some smirking over the patent fact that the "new cemetery folks" had got the better of old Luke at last, and there was some hidden winks over the fervid eloquence of Rev. Mr. Scrooby as he praised the high character of the deceased—encomiums bitter flitted, perhaps, to the last fortnight of his life than the previous five-and-eighty years. But the band was on hand, and its narrow repertoire, though containing no funeral music, gave the greatest satisfaction imaginable. Was it not auspicious to open the new cemetery with the tune, "John Brown's Body," followed, between prayers, by "The Star-Spangled Banner?" Certes. Old Luke Judkin that summer's day had a most cheerful end! "We hev made him," said the undertaker, solemnly—"we hev made him a sorter philanthropeed!"—*J. S. W. in Harper's Weekly.*

A Mulberry Sellers.

Gen. George A. Sheridan, speaking in Washington the other day about Gen. Butler's disappointment at not being able to sell the government the stone for the new library building, said: "I once saw a man in this city more disappointed than Butler. He was a Mulberry Sellers sort of a chap, who told me that he had discovered a stone that was absolutely impervious to heat, a genuine fire-stone, just what was wanted in government buildings, of course, because of its durability, and, consequently, with millions in it. I asked him to bring me samples of the stone. He came next day with three or four little cubes. It was winter, and I had a base-burner glowing in the room with great isinglass doors. I opened one of them, stirred up the coals, and thrust two pieces of the stone far down in the mass. Then I judiciously retired to a far corner of the room and awaited results. They came in about twenty seconds. There was an explosion, which burst every pane of isinglass in the stove. My man stood there aghast with both hands upraised, while he exclaimed: 'By thunder! Another million gone to pot!'"

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