

MIDSUMMER FIRES.

(All the Year Round.)

CHAPTER I.

To-morrow would be midsummer day. The sun was bright as nothing...

The rest were ahead, every one of them laden with green or sun-dried stuff for the burning...

From the gory common the track was hithered for the girls, and they crossed a meadow, stopping at its further side by a brook...

A path winding up a headland led from the western shore to a white road. The red glare of the sunset was upon it...

There were three of them, sisters. One was a child, Nessie; the others, Meta and Kate Quatrone, were on the happy borderland of girlhood and womanhood...

We have no picturesque national garb of a foreign land where it is set, but they were dressed as the hundreds of girls in London might be dressed...

"I'll be utterly foolish, you girls, idling here any longer for those lads." Her accent bore the North-country lilt...

"Nessie was full of life; she danced ahead, or she lingered behind; she sprang to right or left over the broken ground of the headland...

"No, I shall not; certainly I shall not," she cried, laughing. Nevertheless she wore only a nightgown...

"I'm full of respect!" and wild Nessie threw out her arms and made a gay, bowing reverence in a circling fashion to the hills and the green mountains...

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you know; and, though I am matter of fact personified, you may--just say," he smiled, "find me vulnerable somewhere."

The rest were ahead, every one of them laden with green or sun-dried stuff for the burning. These two gathered up their burdens and followed, talking all the way.

From the gory common the track was hithered for the girls, and they crossed a meadow, stopping at its further side by a brook, where green clumps of golden marsh marigolds...

A path winding up a headland led from the western shore to a white road. The red glare of the sunset was upon it and the sparse heather landward glowed ruddy...

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We have no picturesque national garb of a foreign land where it is set, but they were dressed as the hundreds of girls in London might be dressed...

"I'll be utterly foolish, you girls, idling here any longer for those lads." Her accent bore the North-country lilt and the soft, sweet tones of the Manx people...

"Nessie was full of life; she danced ahead, or she lingered behind; she sprang to right or left over the broken ground of the headland...

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and he is going to make his Academy fame, so certain, by a picture which shall have fairly-worship for its motive.

There was a good deal of talking and laughing, as might be supposed, but among it all Meta was again silent.

She was wearing her own marsh marigold stuck under her chin, as a girl might wear a brooch. She was very careful of it, keeping her light wrap well away from it.

She lingered and had; and among such a gay string of merry folks, who would not mean to straggle?

Nessie was by Jim and talking hard and fast. No one paid any heed to her, but we must, for the subject of her talking affects our story.

"There were nine lots, Jim," she said. "I'll know that; and nine have I set the light ten," refining his words red Manx fashion.

"Then what was the count?" "Seven, eight, and nine," she counted. "It's beyond me, missie; but mine'll be the number I kindled. Sure, by token, I'd only ten matches in my box here, an' one left for the pipe, Phah!"

He blew on the pipe-bowl. "It's nigh out she'll be, missie, with me talking an' talking."

"Yes, we've reasoned out the fires, but here I don't know where to begin. We always do it--the children always do it."

"What?" "We lay them about on the door-sills and the window-sills, and we strew them by the out-houses. It is for 'good luck.' We all want 'good luck.'"

"So we do, but--I'd like a reason to see why 'good luck' lurks within the mysteries of these marsh marigolds more than in other flowers."

"Can't give it to you, but you shall have the 'good luck' if you'll have a flower; or shall I keep it back from you?"

"No--no. Give it me." "How excited you are! I've found the chick in your armor. I've found out you are superstitious, and I'll just punish your weakness"--Meta paraded some of his own words--"by not giving you the flower."

"Or--the good luck! Oh! you will." "No."

What was mastering this very proud little bit of matter of fact? He turned first flushed, and something came hid out of his former self.

He ran back to the brook, where he saw one golden starry blossom left, and, plucking it, he brought it like a trophy to Meta.

"This is for you," he cried. "There is 'good luck,' infinite good luck, for you, and--if for you, then for me. You have given me your faith--"

A shout from the rest interrupted him. "Good! he has possibly been gone long, but that he had faith in these old wives' fables of Meta's?"

"Oh, he quick! they are all waiting for us," and Meta ran before him. She could by no means face any talking in such a passionate strain as this matter-of-fact youth was developing.

She felt hot, and she ran up to the others laughing and talking gaily. Certainly her humor had wondrously changed.

CHAPTER II. The sweet midsummer eve came close, and the gray of the night came on. Strangers from the foreign land of England wondered as they drove home from their day's excursioning at the fancy of the peasants for setting light to the gorse everywhere.

All the young Quatrone's were out in the grounds with Willie and his friends. Mr. Quatrone, gray-headed and wise, went out too. Perhaps he laughed over it all, but there had never been a time when he could recollect without the burning of the witch fires. No, indeed; and, if his children had shown themselves very advanced in the common sense of the age and neglectful of the old customs, he, good man, would have been just one degree uncomfortably surprised.

They had all had a merry supper--Manx folk are primitive, and supper is not well wholly cast into oblivion--and then all went out to the gorse. A twinkling light upon a would-be grave face.

"Where is all this to go now?" asked Doyle Philipson, the elder of the two English brothers. "Is this comment the haunt of--of the enemy?" A twinkling light upon a would-be grave face.

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OUR RELATIONS WITH MEXICO.

Thomas C. Manning, of Louisiana, Newly Appointed Minister to that Country.

The President has appointed Thomas C. Manning, of Louisiana, successor to Henry R. Jackson, of Georgia, as Minister to Mexico.

Thomas Courtland Manning was born at Edenton, on Abemarle sound, North Carolina, about fifty-five years ago.

He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and a learned and successful lawyer. After his admission to the bar he practiced for a while in his native town.

In 1855 he removed to Louisiana, making his home at Alexandria, on Red river, where he has since resided. He is reputed to be quite wealthy, owning a large estate in the interior between New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

In 1861 he was elected to the Session Convention of his State as a State's rights Democrat. When war became inevitable he entered the Confederate army as lieutenant of the first military company transferred to the staff of the Confederate Governor of Louisiana, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

In 1863 he was appointed Adjutant-General of the State, and the next year Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. After that he devoted himself to his profession, refusing the nomination of Governor by his party when tendered to him. In 1876 he served as a Tilden elector, and in January, 1877, was appointed chief justice of the State supreme court.

He was relegated to private life two years later, but occupied a seat on the Supreme bench the second year for a term which ended about a year ago, when Governor McKinley refused to reappoint him.

Judge Manning is a man of handsome and courtly presence. He has been four years a trustee of the Peabody educational fund.

Spurred a Sudden Stroke by Collector Magone's Mercy. Edward Barron is a rich Frenchman who was suddenly made very sad yesterday. Mr. Barron is an invalid, and for health's sake he has crossed the ocean to try the American climate.

He was a French physician, and a famous one, and he had been in the United States for some time, but he was not satisfied with the climate here, and he had crossed the ocean to try the American climate.

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