THE CRIMSON VISIONED COW.

BY EDWIN J. WEBSTER.

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MIDDLETON is a great believer in the influence of mind over matter. But he is doubtful how far his theories may be applied to farming. At least, where cows are concerned.

When the family moved to the suburbs Middleton determined to keep a cow. Everything went well until winter set in, when the cow, after the manner of her kind, did not give the accustomed supply of milk. This conduct of the cow's jarred upon Middleton's business instincts. He considered it pure laziness. The tousled-headed boy whom he had hired to look after the cow explained that it wasn't bad-heartedness on the part of the cow, but a lack of grass that was responsible for the decrease in the Middleton milk supply.

"But she has plenty of hay," Middleton objected. "And hay is just as nourishing as grass."

"It ain't so green, do," persisted the tousled one. "Dere's mighty few tings so green as grass. Do there is some," he added, reflectively.

Middleton took this last remark as a reflection on his own knowledge of farming. So he indignantly ordered the tousled boy to leave the barn. The boy slouched sulkily away, black wrath in his heart.

But the boy's remark had suggested an idea to Middleton.

"It's all imagination on the part of that cow to think hay is not as good as grass. If she supposed she was eating grass she would give as much milk as before, even if her food supply happened really to be hay."

"She may be a credulous cow," replied Mrs. Middleton in doubtful tones. "But how even your flow of persuasive words can make her believe hay is grass is more than I can see."

But Mrs. Middleton's incredulity did not decrease her husband's ardor in his plan for revolutionizing dairy farming. The next morning Middleton went to an optician and left an order for an unusually large pair of plain, green glass spectacles. In the afternoon, gloating over his scheme for an increased milk supply, he marched triumphantly out to the barn.

The cow didn't seem to understand why she should wear spectacles, as she had never made any complaint of failing eyesight. But after a little she became somewhat reconciled to them. Middleton kicked around some hay, so that it would look like grass thrown on the floor of the barn. Then he went back to the house to explain more fully to Mrs. Middleton the benefits which would accrue from his idea.

About an hour later the tousled-headed boy entered the barn. The cow was eating the hay, but she certainly was a much puzzled animal. Her eyesight showed that it was green and it looked like grass. But it was dry and didn't in the least taste like grass.

"HE SIDE-STEPPED WITH AN AGILITY WHICH WOULD HAVE SURPRISED HIS BUSINESS ACQUAINTANCES."

Now the tousled-headed boy still cherished feelings of wrath. When he saw the spectacles on the cow he gasped with amazement.

"Blamed if dat guy ain't put glasses on dat cow to make her think she is eating grass," he murmured.

Just then he happened to slip his hand into one of his trousers pockets. Among the usual treasures stowed away in a boy's pocket his fingers touched two pieces of glass. He drew them out. They were red and round and with a little trouble might be fitted into the rims of the spectacles the cow was wearing. And into the mind of the tousled one crept a suggestion of how he might have revenge on Middleton and a little fun on his own account.

"Cows ain't so fierce as bulls," thought the tousled one. "But dey don't like red a bit better."

He took the spectacles from the cow's nose, pushed out the green glasses and inserted the red ones. He replaced the red-glassed spectacles. Then he hastily climbed into the haymow and awaited developments.

When the crimson spectacles were adjusted the cow's peace of mind instantly vanished. To the right, left, and in front was to be seen only the hated color—red. Her wrath was stirred. She made a charge at the crimson haymow. The only result was that she was thrown back, bruised and baffled. She glanced around in anxiety and terror, only to find that all the objects in the once familiar barn were the same odious color. Then she began a mad rush about the barn, mooing with all the force of her lungs.

The tumult aroused Middleton, who ran from the house and threw open the barn door. But when the cow saw a crimson man standing in the doorway, her terror changed to wrath. Plainly, here was the cause of all her troubles. She made a mad charge at Middleton. He side-stepped with an agility which would have surprised his business acquaintances. The cow was unable to stop and thundered through the doorway. Then she turned and prepared for a second charge. Just as Middleton was planning precipitate flight an unusuallly angry and vehement shake of the cow's head shook off the glasses. Things once more resumed their natural color.

The cow stood for a moment, bewildered at the sudden change in her field of vision, then began to walk slowly back to the barn. Middleton saw that her rage was over, but was puzzled to account for it at all.

"Green is the color of a good part of the earth in summer time," he mused. "I don't see why green spectacles should affect a cow with sudden insanity."

Then he saw the spectacles lying on the ground. He picked them up. As he did so he noticed the red glasses. He understood what had happened.

"That young rascal must have changed the glasses. If I catch him I'll give him a lesson on the evils of interfering with experiments in scientific farming that he'll remember the rest of his life."

The tousled-headed boy, hidden in the haymow, wisely gave no indication of his whereabouts. Middleton adjusted the green glasses and tried to replace them on the cow. But that particular cow had had all she cared for of spectacles of any sort, whether provided with red or green glasses. She shook her head in such a threatening manner that Middleton finally abandoned the attempt.

"A scientific experiment that might have made a revolution in dairy farming spoiled by the malice of a red-headed boy," he sighed as he trudged back to the house.

HAND OF PROVIDENCE

By Martha McC. Williams

JEMMY was explaining to Amelia: "This is the way you make a hortus siccus—you get a big book with no printin' in it, and then paste it full of weeds and flowers and grass and little bits of bushes but you have to dry, dry, dry 'em—siccus is Latin for just as dry as a bone."

"I wonder, could we put in Benjamin Byram, esquire?" Bess speculated plaintively. "Heaven knows he's dry enough just as he stands. Then think of the relief, if he was once where you could shut him up and off at will."

Prue giggled outright. "He does talk thirteen to the dozen," she said. "But who wouldn't, with all his chances? Nature made him a fool of the first water, and Fate chipped in by giving him a fortune, and a doting family."

"'Benjamin the Blatant,' Tom Rodman calls him," Bess began, still plaintive. Jemmy came charging at her with Amelia hot upon his heels, and shouting: "You hush, Aunty Bess! You wanter lose me my pony! Mister Byram says he'll give me a Shetland if I don't let nobody say a word against him in this house."

"I b'leeve he wants Jem to fight with Mister Tom Rodman," Amelia interrupted sagely, her head the least bit aside. "And I ain't goin' to help him there," she added pointedly. "'Cause Mister Tom says I'm his sweetheart—he's goin' to wait for me to grow up. He thinks I'm a heap prettier'n Aunty Bess right now."

"How about me?" Prue asked, giggling more than ever. Amelia looked reflectively, but Jemmy stuck his hands in his pockets, set his feet far apart, and said, sticking out his chin after the manner of his model, Benjamin Byram: "Why, Prudy, you know nobody will ever look at you, so long as Aunty Bess and 'Melia are around."

"Won't they, indeed?" Prue queried, drawing down the corners of her mouth meekly, although her eyes twinkled. Jemmy swung on his heel, saying magisterially: "Course not. Why you're all freckled same as a turkey egg, and haven't hardly got meat enough to wrap up your long bones."

"Upon my soul! Say, Miss Prue, shall I take him out and drown him?" Tom Rodman asked, coming through the door as he spoke. But Jemmy only grinned at him—Jemmy was nine and Prue eighteen. They were the best of comrades, despite his brutal frankness. Prue made a dash at him, stood him upon his head, then swung him by an arm and a leg, chanting:

Here he goes! Fingers and toes!
Up the chimney when the wind blows,

Ending in a feint of flinging Jemmy upon the open fire. Amelia improved the opportunity to pull her brother's hair until he howled. They were twins, and pretty badly spoiled, as was but natural, since they had grown up motherless in their grandfather's house.

"I'll swing you by your legs, Prudy, when I'm a man; you see if I don't," Jemmy said, trying to scowl, but grinning in spite of himself. Tom Rodman picked the boy up and flung him across his shoulder, saying gravely: "I hate to do it, but there's nothing else for it. Jemmy, I've been tellin' you this ever so long I'd carry you to the gypsies if you did not behave better. Stop wriggling. You can't get away. But I'll let you kiss 'Melia and the others good-by. Be quick! You won't ever see them again."

"Kiss 'em all yourself. That's what you're after," Jemmy the astute piped huskily, as Tom carried him close to Aunty Bess. His arms were free; impishly he laid hold of the two heads and yanked them together, locking his hands behind the two necks and holding them tight, laughing uproariously all the while. Tom was a gallant fellow; he could do no less than kiss Bess, if all his heart did belong to sweet Miss Prue. And just as he kissed her, who should come in but Mr. Byram, the rich distant cousin, who had been for three weeks a guest at Fairlaw.

Mr. Byram had come there exploring—he felt the need of a wife rather than the want of one. Bess, who was tall and twenty, and the very moral of gracious stateliness when she chose to be, had captivated him out of hand. He would have proposed to her the second day of his visit, never doubting what answer she would make, but that his sense of propriety forbade. Besides, it would not do to dazzle her too suddenly—he must let the great prospects break gently upon her, as dawn broke over the world. So he had been nobly impartial in his devoirs—so much so he had twinges of conscience whenever he thought of Prue. She was hardly more than a schoolgirl, to be sure, but quite mature enough to break her heart over loss of him, if she once let herself seriously believe she had a chance of being Mrs. Byram.

Of Tom Rodman he had taken no more account than to set him down as an impertinent puppy with a knack of coming in at all hours—especially when Mr. Byram least expected or wanted him. To discover him kissing Bess in the face of everybody made Benjamin the Blatant simply furious. All the more furious that Jemmy cried out gleefully: "Mr. Byram! Mister Byram! Come help me hold 'em. They tried to skeer me, but I'm beatin' 'em at their own game."

"Let loose, you little varmint! Shut up!" Tom commanded. Prue made a dash at the tangle and deftly untwined Jemmy's fingers, letting Bess escape. Mr. Byram stood speechless in wrath and amazement, until Amelia, sidling up to him, slid her hand within his and said, with the least toss of the head: "They ain't behavin' ugly—Mister Tom will be Aunty Bess' nephew when he marries me—and the Fairies always kiss their kinfolk, if they ain't too far off and great big stuffs into the bargain — Prue and Aunty Bess said so the first night you came."

"Indeed!" Mr. Byram exploded. "With my coming, I suppose, for a text. Well, young ladies, I see in all this the hand of Providence. A just and ever-watchful God would not permit me to fall victim to your mercenary designs. No doubt you were tempted by my wealth and position, although you are so wholly incapable of appreciating a man of my character—"

"Kindly come outside with me before you say any more," Tom Rodman interrupted, setting Jemmy down with a thump and putting himself in front of Bess, who had grown very white and had eyes of scorching flame. Prue, contrariwise, had flushed so scarlet it hid all her freckles. Tom reached a hand to her and drew her toward him, while he went on steadily: "Your talk needs a man to hear and answer it. I'm that man. Bess and Prue have no brother, and Mr. Fairlie is past fightin' age. But Prue belongs to me, and that gives me the right to stand up for 'em. So you come along! We'll settle this the minute we strike the turnpike and neutral ground."

"Hush, Tom! Remember he's our guest!" Bess pleaded. Prue gave her sweetheart a roguish and heavenly smile. Amelia looked fit to cry over the toppling of her aircastle, but Jemmy turned a handspring by way of showing his joy in the "melley." As he came up standing, he stepped in front of Byram, swelled out his chest and said, stoutly:

"Don't you try no crawfish games! You know you wanted to marry Aunty Bess! You told me so, and said I must court her for you. I ain't very big, but if you try to go back on her I'll let you know I can shoot my little gun—and that's more than you can do. We won't have a regular duel, like grandpa tells about. Let's try a buttin' match instead, and if I butt you over, like David did Goliath, you'll propose to Aunty Bess same as ever and gimme that Shetland you been talkin' so much about."

"Ladies and gentlemen, good-by," Mr. Byram began in his most ceremonious voice. He got no further. Jemmy went at him like a catapult, bowled him down and out of the door, only stopping when his enemy lay prostrate upon the hall threshold. There the grown-ups came to the rescue, and so managed it that Mr. Byram went off an hour later, somewhat bruised in his person and self-esteem, but as to his outer man, whole and speckless. When the carriage rolled away with him, Tom Rodman drew a long breath, and said, as he tossed a foreign letter to Bess: "Your sweetheart is comin' home by the next steamer; had a cable this mornin'. You see, I have been writing him things. He will agree with me and the late Byram that in all this there is unmistakably the hand of Providence."

SHADOWS

By Hartley Willard

"I TELL yo', gal—I tell yo' I'd rather see yo' dead twice over than jined to Abe Taylor. Befo' I would see it cum about, I'd kill one or t'other of yo' with my own hand. Whar's yo'r pride? Whar's yo'r shame? Whar's the respect yo' owe yo'r dead mother? If yo' was jined up to Abe Taylor d'ye reckon me an' yo'r brother Bill could hang around yere agin what folks would say? D'ye think we could look our nayburs in the face arter that?

High up on the side of the grim old mountain, father and daughter sat on the steps of an humble log cabin on a summer's afternoon. He was a man of fifty, loose-jointed and a typical mountaineer; she was a girl of nineteen.

"An' why?" she finally asked.

"An' why?" he fiercely repeated as his eyes flashed. "If yo' don't know why then yo' ar' no gal o' mine! Heven't I bin tellin' yo' why ever since yo' was able to understand things? Wasn't yo' ten y'ars old when I brung home the dead body of yo'r brother Jim? Wasn't yo' fo'teen when I cum crawlin' home with two bullets in my body? Wasn't yo' sixteen, an' sittin' right yere on this spot when a bullet fired from the thicket over thar' knocked my cap into yo'r face? Yo' remember all these things, Mary—yo' heven't forgot—an' then yo' ask me why yo' an' Abe Taylor can't jine up. Lawd, gal, but I wouldn't be mo' astonished if yo' struck me a blow in the face!"

"See yere, pop," said the girl, as she straightened up, clasped her hands over her knee and looked away into the laurels, "Twenty years ago, befo' I was bo'n, yo' got up a fuss with the Taylors."

"They dun got up a fuss with me, gal."

"Well, there was a fuss. It was about a mewl or a hawg or sunthin'. The Taylors an' the Renfrews went to killin'. Yo' dun for the old man."

"Yes, by ——, I did!"

"An' then one of his boys dun for our Jim."

"Shot our Jim down like a dawg an' never gin him no show!"

"An' then our Bill dun for one o' them."

"He did, an' I'm mighty proud o' him."

"An' then you git almost dun for."

"That's it, gal. One o' them varmints ambushed me an' put two bullets into my body, an' the lead's thar' yit. I've been waitin' a hull y'ar to ambush a Taylor in return, but the durned cowards ar' as cunnin' as foxes. The chance will cum, though—it will shorely cum. Me'n Bill will never rest easy as long as thar's a Taylor left livin', an', thank God, thar's only two of 'em dodgin' aroun' on top of airth."

The girl was silent for a moment, rocking to and fro. Then, in the same quiet, even voice, she said:

"A quarrel lastin' twenty y'ars an' three or fo' killin's bekase yo' an' the old man Taylor fell out like two boys! Yo've carried murder in yo'r heart all these y'ars, an' it's thar' yit. It might hev bin so with the Taylors once, but yo' know they've wanted peace for five y'ars past."

"Bekase they ar' cowards, gal!"

"Bekase they've got sense, pop. They can't see that the game is wuth the candle. A y'ar ago I met Abe Taylor over at Bridge Cove. I knowed him on sight, and he knowed me. We knowed that we orter hate each other like pizun, bekase of the quarrels an' killins' but sumhow 'twas jest the other way. We see each other agin an' agin, an' we liked each other better an' better every time. Abe has bin for makin' friends, an' so hev I. We 'uns didn't start the quarrel. We 'uns can't feel that these shootin's and killin's is right. Bimeby, me an' Abe falls in love an' would git married, but yo' an' Bill stand in the road. Yo' ar' my pop an' Bill is my brother, but I'm tellin' yo' straight that Abe Taylor is as squar' and white as either one of yo', an' he's got a heap less murder in his heart. I'm lovin' him, pop—lovin' him well 'nuff to be his wife an' do all a wife kin do, but when he wanted me to run away with him—wanted it bekase yo' stood ready for mo' killins—I wouldn't agree. I said I'd come an' tell yo' all about it an' hear what yo' had to say. I've told yo', an' what answer hev I got?"

"You've got my answer that I'll shoot Abe Taylor on sight!" shouted the father in fierce tones. "Yes, gal, if yo' was his wife ten times over I'd shoot him down. I wasn't 'spectin' this treachery from yo', Mary. I've bin father and mother to yo' these many years, an' I'd never believed that yo' would throw yo'r own pop over an' side agin him. Yo' couldn't git Bill to do it—no, not if yo' would offer him all the land 'twixt yere and the river."

"I can never make yo' understand, sighed the girl. "I love yo' as my pop, and I'm grateful for all yo'r kindnesses, but don't yo' see that I can't pick up this old quarrel an' hate as yo' do an' feel yo'r feelins for revenge? It's the same with Abe. He wants peace and friendliness. Together we want a weddin' an' cabin home. I said Abe Taylor is a squar' man. If he wasn't would he dun agree to cum over yere this evenin' an' hold out his hand to yo' an' ask yo' to bury the past?"

"Abe Taylor comin' over yere?" asked the father in a voice hardly above a whisper.

"I'm lookin' for him every minit."

The father rose and entered the house and took down his loaded rifle, and when he sat down on the steps again the weapon lay across his knees.

"Is it for Abe?" asked the girl.

"For shore. I'll shoot him dead in his tracks!"

"Then yo' ar' a coward, an' I'm no kin to yo'!"

For a minute they looked into each other's eyes—his showing the darkest passions—hers revealing contempt—and then they turned their heads. Thus they sat for ten minutes without further speech and the westering sun sunk to the treetops and blazed full in their faces and half blinded them. A sudden step caught their ears and both turned their heads to the right.

"Abe!" gasped the girl.

"I'll kill him!" growled the man.

Some one turned the corner of the house and stood in the full blaze of the sunset. The old man lifted his rifle and fired over the girl's shoulder before she could raise a hand to prevent. For a minute a smoke cloud hung low and obscured the body on the ground. Then the girl said quietly:

"Pop, you've killed a man, but it's yo'r own son Bill!"

The old man staggered over and knelt beside the body, and as he knelt, his face drawn and haggard and his breathing whistling in his throat, a young man turned in from the road and halted close beside the girl.

"Pop thought it was you'!" whispered the girl.

Abe nodded his head.

"Wait till I bundle my things and we'll go."

CHERRIES

By John Bridges

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THE day he landed in Japan he found her in the groves at Yamato, when there was celebration for the coming of the blossom which is worshiped in the April weather—the blossom of the cherry.

Sewall thought there was only one name for her and though his vocabulary was indistinct and incomplete, he managed to make her understand that he would call her "Cherries."

"Honorable Yellow Hair," she said, falling into his mood, "it thangks me, yaes."

And so that was the meeting of Sewall and the little woman whom he called Cherries.

Sewall was a writer of fiction. His friends said he wrote the "fictionest" kind of fiction—the kind that doesn't sell—but somehow he had managed to get a book published and the sales had given him a royalty which he religiously saved in order that he might go to Japan.

From that day Sewall seemed to see her everywhere. In the celebrations in the garden and in the tea places where he went for refreshment there was always the vision of the little girl he had seen in the day when the cherries blossomed in the groves. But it was not in her physical being that he saw her, for after that first day he could find her nowhere. He simply dreamed of her—and "Cherries" came to be a word that stood out on every page of the white paper upon which he tried to write his impressions of Japan.

Who she was he did not know. The American Consul had presented him to her, and the American Consul had gone away to Kobe on a mission, so Sewall could not ask him the name of the girl who had charmed him out of his day's work.

But one day, after two weeks which had seemed as many years to Sewall, he found her in the gardens with her sisters, playing with the paints and the brushes, painting cherry blossoms on a dainty screen. He approached and she recognized him instantly.

"Most August Yellow Hair," she said, "it is of pleasantness that my miserable vision is greeted with thy sight."

"I am very glad to see you again," said Sewall, gently. Though in his heart he wanted to say, "I have wanted to see you all these weeks."

"Yaes?" said Cherries.

"Yes," said Sewall, as he sat down on the ground beside her.

And then he told her how his mother was coming out from America, and how she was a very great woman.

"Bigger'n thaet?" said Cherries, stretching her arms out as far as they would go.

"Well, no," replied Sewall. Hardly that big, but I mean that she is a great woman because she is president of a lot of societies, and she writes books and reads papers at clubs—and all that sort of thing."

"Ee-us," said Cherries—and that was as near as she ever came to saying "yes."

"And now," continued Sewall, "I want you to meet my mother. She will be here to-morrow, and I am to give a little tea for her at the hotel. Will you and the sisters come?

"It gives me mooch thangks, Most Honorable Yellow Hair," said Cherries as she bowed low and showed the most marvelously beautiful neck, and the unusual little curls that clustered at the back.

The next day Sewall gave the tea at the hotel. His mother had arrived, and Cherries and the sisters and the Consul and his wife and a lot of other Americans were there.

Sewall presented Cherries to the mother. The "great woman" raised her lorgnette and regarded the little girl critically.

"Beautiful!" she exclaimed. "Why don't you marry her, my boy, and take her to New York?" She spoke playfully in English.

"But what was it, that the Honorable Great Woman was pleased to say?" asked Cherries.

"She asked why I didn't marry you—you be my wife, you know," said Sewall. "Will you?" And his voice was earnest.

"It would give me mooch thangks," said Cherries. Then into her cheeks came a flush such as Sewall had seen when he gave her the name.

So that is how Arthur Sewall, writer of fiction, came to win his Japanese bride.