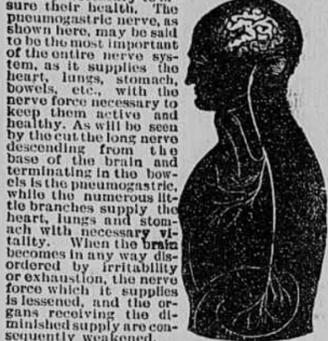


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ROCKING BABY.

Rocking softly to and fro, Baby is white as the new white snow, Baby is sweet as the rose pink dawn, Fair as the land where the summers have gone. Drop the eyelids slow, so slow, Baby rocking to and fro.

MISS NAN.

Slender, but not thin, with soft, hazel eyes and long lashes, pale complexion, light brown hair, with here and there a strand of gray, not pretty, but attractive looking, simple in manner, speech and dress—that was Miss Nan.

That she was an old maid was beyond dispute. Her most intimate friend would not have denied it if he could. Though for the matter of that he could not, belonging, as he did, to the feline species and not being blessed with the power of speech. She was "turned" 85 if she was a day, and the most hopeful of that social scourge known as matchmakers had long since scratched her name off their list of possibilities.

Miss Nan lived in her own cottage, and the lawn in front of it was the neatest in Tiffin, as the little parlor inside was the tidiest. The three cats that monopolized the hearth rug in the parlor of evenings were as sleek as could be and exceptionally well behaved for cats. The furniture was of a quaint pattern, but the easy chairs were comfortable in the extreme, and if the little earthenware teapot was half as good a brewer as it was a singer I don't blame her for indulging in its contents rather freely.

That Miss Nan had a good heart and a kind one I can vouch for, and so could many a barefooted urchin and many an overworked factory girl. There was no Sunday school teacher in Tiffin as beloved by her scholars, and they all knew the flavor of her famous cookies. I was not surprised to hear one day that Miss Nan had had a bit of romance in her life, so long ago that the younger generation had never heard of it and the older generation had long since forgotten it.

There had been a certain handsome young man who had courted her in the old days, and not unsuccessfully. He had been practicing law for three or four years, and his prospects were unusually bright. He was genial in his way, but proud to a fault. He had never been a lady's man, and despite the fact that many jaunty caps had been set for him he had almost been set down for a young bachelor confirmed in his waywardness until he met Miss Nan at a church festival. From that evening the predictions toppled over like cardhouses, for, though she did not apparently reciprocate at first, he was a determined wooer, with youth, good looks and a winning tongue to back him. So at last she melted—of course she did, for what else was that woman's heart of hers created—and the gossip began to wonder when the day would be set and to surmise among themselves that it had been set and was still a secret. But whether it really had or had not been Silas Grantley knew and Miss Nan knew, but the gossips never did find out.

Of the matrimonially inclined young ladies who had set their caps for Silas Grantley before the fateful church festival none had set them so artfully, so hopefully as Lizzie Minks. She was a pretty bit of a woman (long since the wife of a henpecked husband), with sparkling black eyes, sharp features and a tight little figure that she was wont to deck out with the gayest ribbons imaginable. She had Spanish blood in her veins and was proud of it, and proud of her temper too. Though Silas had never paid her any serious attention, she had appeared attractive to him until he met Miss Nan. If it had not been for that, there is no telling what might not have happened. Miss Minks was not a young lady to submit to such a total eclipse calmly, and the truth was that she never had any intention of submitting to it at all. One day about the time that the gossips had settled it satisfactorily among themselves that "the day had finally been set," she came to the conclusion that matters had progressed far enough and made an afternoon call on her successful rival.

She left her pretty airs and graces at home with her gay ribbons that morning and was a sad enough figure when her hostess ushered her into the parlor—the same little parlor, though Miss Nan's mother was living then, and it was brighter to her than it was in after years. Lizzie Minks told her story well and wept bitter tears over it too. She told how Silas had wooed her and won her and had promised to marry her, and how the day had been named, and how he had kept up the cruel deception even after he had met Miss Nan herself, and how heartlessly he had finally thrown her over and laughed at her. Then when she saw that the girl at her side appeared sorely troubled she became remorseful and vowed that she ought not to have told her. Then she grew hysterical and railed against all men and despised herself for an idiot to have ever trusted one of them. Her auditor was very quiet through it all, but Lizzie Minks knew that her shaft had been a straight one and went home exulting. After she had gone, Miss Nan did what many another girl in her place would have done. She had a hard cry. She did not tell her mother. She could not have told any one. She hated to think that even Lizzie Minks knew the man she loved in such an altered light. But the mere fact of thinking of him softened her, and she hoped—aye, in the loyalty of her heart, she trusted that Silas had been misunderstood. There should be no misunderstanding between them. She determined to tell him that evening, when he called, all that she had heard. But tangled through her trouble was a sore feeling of disappointment that Silas could have even carelessly trifled with another woman, and a feeling, too, of unconscious jealousy in the thought that he had prolonged the farce after he had begun the wooing of herself. It was a feeling akin to resentment against him, in justice to her own worth.

When he entered the parlor a few hours later, he knew at once that something was wrong, and Miss Nan did not leave him long in doubt. She told him the whole story, only withholding the name of her informant. She kept back her tears, too, and the effort made her voice hard.

She waited for him to speak when she had finished, and if they had been sitting nearer to each other would have touched his hand. I said that Silas Grantley was proud, and if ever a proud man was humiliated that man was himself. No other proof than her own voice could have made him think that this woman could have believed for a moment such a base falsehood against his manhood. The feeling of deep injury and indignation was uppermost in his mind. Without a word he rose and turned to go. At the door he paused an instant to look at her, but only for an instant. There was a quick, firm step on the gravel walk the gate shut noisily, and he was gone. From that night Miss Nan never saw Silas Grantley again. Never saw him again? Never saw him again? How many times she saw him in that doorway, when the feline family were purring contentedly and the little earthenware teapot was singing cheerfully on the hearth, only Miss Nan knew. How many times that last reproachful glance looked in upon her on the lonely nights of the long years that followed, when the whole bitter truth was before her, only Miss Nan knew. How utterly dreary the tidy little parlor was at times during the long, long hours, when the thought of that last night came back to her, how often the soft gray eyes wept bitterly when she thought of the wrong that she had done him, and that she never could undo now, Miss Nan, and only Miss Nan, know.

And that was the story of her romance. A late train west bound carried Silas Grantley away that night—carried him away so completely that Tiffin neither saw nor heard of him again and soon forgot him. She lived her life as best she could, and before her little world the thorns in her path were trodden unflinchingly. Wherever a woman's hand was needed, there was Miss Nan; wherever charitable duties were the hardest, in the hardest winters, among the hardest class of people, there was Miss Nan, and though her purse was not a large one it was open constantly. I think it was this constant doing of good, this constant healing of minds and hearts and bodies, that kept the hard lines off her face, even when the early gray strands glistened in her brown hair. If there was one weakness for which she had no compassion, it was the weakness of drunkenness. If there were any mendicants who left her door empty handed, they were those who went there with the fumes of alcohol on their breath. Truly the drunkard in her eyes was detestable.

And so the summers passed and the winters passed until the time when my story opens, and Miss Nan had become an old maid beyond question or dispute. New lives came into the little town, and old lives went out. Girls in pinafores and small boys in short trousers grew to be men and women, married and set up for themselves and had children of their own, but to Miss Nan one year was but a repetition of another, and it sometimes seemed to her that she was continually going around in a circle that had long since become monotonous. If Miss Nan ever thought that she might have made her life happier, she guarded the thought well, and if the smiling matrons over occasioned the slightest envy in her breast they could as easily have learned it from the exterior of the neat cottage as from its prim interior.

One wintry March morning she started out with a basket on her arm to visit a sick family, when she noticed a small crowd of men and boys a short distance from her gate. The gibes that reached her ears and the incoherent profanity that followed them told her that a drunken man was the center of the group. She knew she would be obliged to pass them, but with the determination not to be deterred from her purpose by such an unworthy cause she held her head a trifle higher, involuntarily drew her skirts closer about her and walked on. As she neared the group she saw that the man was reeling. He was a wretched looking creature, with long tangled hair, a dirty beard, a battered remnant of a hat and ragged clothes that hung loosely on the thin shivering figure. She took one glance at him, and the basket dropped from her arm. She walked straight up to him, laid her hand on his frayed sleeve and led him to her own gate and up the gravel walk and into the neat little cottage and into the tidest parlor in all Tiffin. How she took on over him, and cried over him, and bathed his face with cold cologne water, and had old Mrs. Young, her ancient maid of all work, cook him the daintiest breakfast imaginable! Who would have thought it of Miss Nan? And what would Tiffin say? Little cured Miss Nan what Tiffin would say. For all her tears, there was not a lighter heart in the world that day than Miss Nan's. If there had been one bright spot in her lonely life, it had been the hope of his return, and as the empty years came and went she had sometimes felt that she was hoping against hope. And now he had come back. What did it matter how he had come? He had come, and that was enough for Miss Nan.

At first Silas was dazed and insensible to his surroundings, but when the breakfast was brought in to him he ate like a famished dog. Mrs. Young, wise woman that she was, had brewed some black coffee, so strong that its very aroma might have had a sobering influence, and when Silas had drunk two big cups of it, steaming hot, he began to look around him. The little parlor had not changed so very much in all those years, and remembering first how he had tramped into Tiffin the night before it began to dawn on him where he really was. Then his eyes rested on Miss Nan, and he knew it all. He buried his face in his hands and sobbed. Then a woman's arms were about the ragged coat, and the tired head was on her breast, and the tangled hair was anointed with her tears.

Did they marry? What a question! Of course they did. Silas Grantley reformed, and with reformation came health and success. There never was a better husband, and the happiest wife in Tiffin is—Miss Nan.—Lewis Vital Bogy in Once a Week.

Rossini. Rossini was intolerably jealous of all his musical contemporaries, and particularly of Meyerbeer. In 1836 he heard "The Huguenots," and on listening to the performance from the beginning to the end he made up his mind that Meyerbeer had excelled him and determined to write no more. He lived until 1868, but produced nothing for the lyric stage. His 32 years of retirement were spent in the pleasures of a voluntary. He was particularly fond of good eating and drinking and assembled about him the youngest and gayest society he could attract to his house.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Accounted For. "I never get angry with a fool," was the cutting remark of a man who wanted to crush a rival. "That accounts for your always being on such good terms with yourself," was the reply.—London Tit-Bits.

FINANCE AND COMMERCE.

New York Stock Market. NEW YORK, Aug. 30.—During the first hour of business at the stock exchange to day prices were further depressed owing to realizing sales and manipulation by the bears and sold out bulls. All the leading issues were influenced, and declines ranging from 1/4 to 1 1/2 per cent. were recorded. Sugar and the Grangers were the heaviest sufferers, Sugar falling 1 1/2 to 106 1/2, St. Paul 1/2 to 64 1/2, Burlington and Quincy 1 to 70 1/2, Rock Island 1/2 to 65 1/2. The selling movement exhausted itself before mid-day, and operators who considered the recent decline too rapid began to buy.

London at the same time came into the market as a buyer of Louisville and Nashville, and a local bull pool also became more active in the specialties. This settled the course of the general list for the day, and after the first hour the tendency was upward. Louisville and Nashville was advanced to 57 against 55 at the opening. Bulls on the stock claim that still higher prices will be made for it as well as the shares of the other Southern roads for the reason that the prospects for increased business activity are brighter in the South than in any other section of the country. The expressions of leading officials of the Grangers certainly bear them out in this. The views of prominent railroad men recently received from Chicago are certainly lugubrious enough to turn the trading element away from the Western roads, and as the disposition here at the moment is hopeful, speculators are disposed to array themselves on the bull side of Southern stocks.

Lead, Chicago Gas, Whiskey, Cotton, Oil and Electric were weak early in the day but closed firm. Tobacco fell 1 1/2 to 104. In the inactive issues Manhattan rose 1/4 to 118 1/2; Lead preferred, 1 1/2 to 90, and Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis preferred, 1 1/2 to 49. The market, except for Sugar closed firm. Net changes show advances of 1/4 to 1 1/2 per cent. Louisville and Nashville leading Rock Island, St. Paul and Omaha, and New York Central lost 1/4 to 1/2, and Sugar 1 1/2 per cent. The bond market was strong. Sales of listed stocks, 143,000 shares; unlisted, 65,000. Treasury balances: Coin, \$75,293,000; currency, \$64,487,000.

Money on call easy at 1 per cent., last loan at one and closing offered at 1 per cent. Prime mercantile paper, @4 1/2 per cent. Bar silver, 66 1/2. Sterling exchange easy, with actual business in bankers' bills at 48 1/2 @ 48 1/2 for sixty days and 48 1/2 @ 48 1/2 for demand; posted rates, 48 1/2 @ 48 1/2. Commercial bills, 48 1/2 @ 48 1/2. Government bonds firm. State bonds dull. Railroad bonds higher. Silver at the board closed at 66 1/2 bid. Norfolk and Western preferred stock closed at 24 1/2.

Produce and Merchandise. NEW YORK, August 30.—Flour quiet, weak; winter wheat, low grades, 1.85 @ 2.50; fair to fancy, 2.40 @ 2.90; Minnesota clear, 2.25 @ 2.65; patents, 3.40 @ 3.90; superfine, 1.60 @ 2.10. Southern flour dull, weak; common to fair extra, 8.10 @ 8.00; good to choice do., 3.50. Wheat dull, higher, with options firm; No. 2 red, store and elevator 57 1/2 @ 57 1/2; @ 58; options declined 1/2 @ 3/4, rallied 1/2 @ 3/4, fell 1/2, closed steady at 3/4 @ 3/4 over yesterday, with a dull trade. August, 57 1/2; September, 57 1/2; December, 61 1/2; May, 66 1/2.

Corn dull, scarce, firmer; No. 2, 63 1/2 @ 63 1/2; elevator, 62 1/2 @ 63 1/2; @ 63 1/2; options were dull, firm and 1/4 @ 1/2 higher, August, 63 1/2; September, 61 1/2; December, 57 1/2; May, 56 1/2. Oats less active, firmer; options dull. 1/2 @ 1/2; August, 33 1/2; September, 33 1/2; November, 35 1/2; December, 36 1/2; No. 2 white, October, 36 1/2; spot, No. 2, 33 @ 33 1/2; No. 2 white 36 @ 36 1/2; mixed Western, 33 @ 34; white, do 36 @ 41. Hay dull, weak; shipping, 50; good to choice, 80 @ 90. Wool quiet, steady; domestic fleeces, 18 @ 22; pulled, 15 @ 24. Texas, 10 @ 14. Beef quiet, steady; family, 10.00 @ 12.00; extra mess, 8.00 @ 8.50; beef hams dull, steady, 22; tierced beef quiet, firm; city extra, India mess, 17. Cut meats quiet, steady; pickled bellies, 8 1/2; shoulders, 7; hams, 11 1/2 @ 12; middles nominal.

Molasses, foreign nominal; New Orleans, open kettle, good to choice, 27 @ 26, quiet, steady. Peanuts quiet. Coffee options opened steady, closed firm, 5 @ 40 points up; August, 14.40 @ 14.45; October, 13.30 @ 13.35; December, 12.65 @ 12.75; March, 12.45; May, 12.15 @ 12.30; spot Bio dull, steady; No. 7, 16. Sugar, raw dull, fair demand; fair refining, 3 1/2; refined quiet, steady; off A, 4.16 @ 4 1/2; standard A, 4.13 @ 4 1/2; cut loaf, 5 1/2 @ 5.90; crushed, 5 1/2 @ 5.90; Liverpool, 4.13 @ 4 1/2. Freights to Liverpool market quiet; depressed; cotton, 3-32 pence; grain, 1 pence nominal.

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