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VOL. IX.

NATCHITOCHEES, LOUISIANA, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 18, 1897.

NO. 19.

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LOON.
Loon dweller by the lonely lake,
Remote among our northern hills,
Bound wooded shores thy lone cries wail
The sleeping echoes, re daily break
The singing of the rills.

Then hast the storm a welcome guest
At thy home by the water's edge,
The waves may plash about thy breast;
May, playful, lift and rock thy nest
Built on the rocky ledge.

Then art a ruler in good right,
Strong master of all winds that blow,
Thy wings outstrip the storm-tossed kite,
Thy swimming in the swallow's flight
Seen in the depths below.

Then utter with a cavernous groan
The broken waters of the pond,
And, quicker than the eye can trace,
Examined by the water's edge
A good half mile beyond.

Ah! did these lone demands arise
Borne on the startled listening air,
As if from neither world did rise
In agony to earth and skies
An outcry of despair.

Froed in thy mate as dead by side
Ye cleave the air with whistling wings;
Your brood that pecked its abode
Those who would never heard to ring.
— Isaac B. Choate in New York Home Journal.

HEPZIBAH.
The room had been still for a long while. Only the even, monotonous splash of the outgoing tide and now and again a restless, unconscious movement of the dying woman in the bed disturbed the stillness of the night.

In the big armchair by the bedside, in the light of the lamp, sat a gaunt woman, angular and haggard, with thin compressed lips, yellow skin, light eyes and dead stare, colored hair drawn tightly back from her forehead and twisted into an uncompromising knot at the nape of the neck.

She had watched for many weary nights now beside that bed, but still her eyes were wide and watchful and her attitude alert. She counted each fluttering breath of the girl's form beneath the sheet, and she noted each quiver of the unconscious eyelids.

The night wore on, and with the coming of the gray dawn a wind arose, moaning round the little house and shaking the fastenings of the sidewalk window.

The dying woman stirred, and she moaned, then slowly opened her eyes—green, and blue eyes—like a child in trouble. She fixed them upon the watcher in the chair with a pathetic look of entreaty.

"Hepzibah!" The pale lips just formed the whispered word.

The gaunt woman rose hastily and bent over her.

"Hepzibah! you have been very good to me!"

A painful pause; breathing was so difficult.

"Am I dying now?"

The woman bending over her made no response, but tears gathered in her hard eyes, and her thin lips quivered.

"No, you need not tell me. I know I am. I can feel it. Hepzibah, you have been so good to me. There is something that you must do—for me—when I am gone!"

Hepzibah bent over her, waiting, watchful.

The dying girl raised one feeble hand, pointing toward the old bureau in the corner of the room.

"There—in the third drawer on the left—are letters. Will you bring them to me?"

Hepzibah brought over to her a little bundle, tied round with faded pink ribbon.

The young woman fingered it lovingly, wistfully.

"They are Jack's letters—my Jack, Hepzibah! When I am gone, I trust you to burn them for me. Tom must never know. Poor Tom—he has been a good husband to me, but I loved Jack first—only he was so wild. I did not know that he cared for me. And—he went away in a temper—and I married Tom. But when Jack came back from sea last time, I—I found out how much he cared. It was terrible—and I loved him so! Then he was drowned—my poor Jack!"

A weak sob choked her broken whispering.

"Promise me you will burn them, Hepzibah, for Tom's sake."

"Dear, I promise."

"You have been so good to me, so patient with me. When I am gone, you will be good to poor Tom."

A dull red flush overspread the elder woman's face. She turned her head into the shadow.

"I will do what I can, Nellie," she responded in a smothered voice.

"Call Tom now. I feel I am going soon—going. I feel so cold—so numb."

Hepzibah hastily left the room. She was back in an instant, followed by a stout, ruddy-faced man of about 60. He stepped softly to the bed and took the dying woman's hand in his big grasp.

"Come, Nell, my lass, you must have a brave heart. We'll have you better soon." There were tears in his cheery voice.

Nellie looked at him with a faint smile. She raised the big red hand in which her own was imprisoned to her lips. Then, exhausted by her recent efforts, she closed her eyes and seemed to sleep. Presently she started violently. Her eyes opened in terror.

"The letters! You will burn them, Hepzibah!"

Tom turned to Hepzibah wondering. He thought the delirium had returned.

"What letters does she mean?"

Hepzibah was silent. She averted her eyes. Then:

"She means her dead mother's letters," she replied in a steady voice.

The dying woman looked her gratitude for the saving lie. There was a silence again and a solemn sense of waiting in the room. At last Nellie made a faint movement with her hand.

The tide was nearly out. Beyond the sea was rising in golden splendor, making a glittering pathway across the waves, straight to the cottage window. The night wind had softened into a

warm breeze. It came wafted in, mingling with the salt of the sea—with the scent of the flowers in the little garden below.

Nellie's big, sad eyes took in all the beauty of the morning; then they gently closed.

So Nellie Thurgood, Tom Thurgood's young wife, died and was buried in the little cemetery by the sea, and the tide came in and the tide went out through the long summer days and nights and peaceful order reigned in the little cottage, for Hepzibah was a notable housekeeper, and Tom was grateful to her in a dull, impersonal way. His heart was buried in a newly made grave on the cliff side, and nothing seemed real to him but that.

Hepzibah watched him from under her white eyelashes and kept silent, but his pipe was always ready for him when he came in and his favorite food simmered on the hob.

Hepzibah's hair grew lighter as the days went on. Her cheeks had a comely pinkish tinge, she began to think of long dresses. She bought a blue gingham gown in the village and a muslin handkerchief for her neck. Her voice took a softer note. She began to sing about her work.

But Tom would sit in the chair during the long summer twilight, and when he came in to his supper his feet dragged wearily, and his eyes were dull with misery.

"You should not grieve so," said Hepzibah softly one night after supper. She was knitting in the firelight. Her head was bent over her work.

Tom woke as from a dream. He looked at her with unseeing eyes.

"Ah, it's well to say that to a man whose heart is breaking."

His voice grew husky. He turned away his head to the door.

"But you shouldn't grieve as one without hope. Time must soften things a bit. You have your life before you."

Tom laughed a short, bitter laugh not good to hear.

"She was all I had—my Nellie—the apple of my eye. What good's life to me now? Such pretty ways she had, too!" he went on sadly. "Such loving, tender ways!"

Hepzibah's needles flashed in the firelight.

"There are other women in the world so fond as Nellie," she said softly, with her eyes on her knitting.

There was a long silence in the room. The fire flickered. A slender fall on the hearth. Hepzibah would bear her heart throbs. She slowly lifted her eyes to the man's face.

He was not looking at her at all, but at a china shepherdess upon the little table against the wall. His eyes were troubled. He was trying to remember.

"My Nellie did not keep that on there. No, it was on the mantelpiece here that she had it."

He brought the ornament over, dusting it with his handkerchief.

"We must keep the things as she left them, Hepzibah," he said. But Hepzibah had slipped out of the door into the summer darkness.

She reached her arm on the little gate and stood looking far out to sea. Her face shone white and ghostly in the dimness. She shivered in the warm air.

"You dead woman—you Nellie," she whispered tensely, "why will you not give him up to me? You have your Jack. You do not want him—and I—oh, my God!"

A great tearful sob choked her. The shimmering waves mocked her. Her face hardened.

"Why should I not tell him? I shall do you no harm. How can one hurt the dead? You are asleep in the churchyard, and I love him—I tell you I love him!"

The man was sitting, smoking moodily, gazing into the glowing fire when Hepzibah glided in and stood behind his chair.

"Tom, I can't bear that you should grieve so. She wasn't worthy of a love like yours."

"Hepzibah!"

"I have thought you ought to know," she faltered, "because I can't bear to see you spoiling your life for love of her—who did not love you at all, but Jack."

"Woman, what do you mean? What lies are you telling me?"

"It's true. Don't you remember her calling out about the letters she brought to me? She gave me a packet—Jack's letters to her."

"My God! Give them to me!"

"I don't not mind so much, Tom."

"The letters!"

Hepzibah laid the packet on the table and crept away up the staircase to her room.

The still hours passed by. Night waned, but Hepzibah would cry and whimper, crouched by the bed, straining her ears for any sound from below.

An hour before dawn came the sound of a chair scraping on the flagged floor. Then drawers were opened and shut. His footsteps echoed to and fro; then silence and the scratching of a pen.

It grew unbearable. Disheveled, wan, fearful, she crept down the stairs and peered in.

Tom Thurgood sat at the table writing by the dim candlelight. He had on his rough pilot's coat. A bundle tied in a red handkerchief rested beside him.

Hepzibah's broken cry aroused him. He rose and came toward her.

"I'm going away—back to sea again," he said gravely. "You'd well come to the cottage and the bits of furniture. There's no home for me now—the place would kill me. Get back to bed, woman. Good-by; there, go!"

He turned back to his writing, and the room was quiet again. Presently he threw down his pen and passed his lanky fingers through his hair.

"The wind means terrible tonight," he said.

It was Hepzibah above crying for her lost paradise—Chapman's Magazine.

TWO IN A SINK HOLE.
A KENTUCKY PRINTER NARRATES A THRILLING EXPERIENCE.

While following the call of his faithful dog he met with a mishap—in a dark hole with a fierce wild beast—the escape and recognition.

Pretty much everybody in the crowd had told a story of the gun or dog or about as much like a hunter or fisherman as he did an angel.

"It's your turn now, Maggie," said the reporter.

"I never hunted anything but board-houses over in Brooklyn," he said, with a wary and dodging kind of air, as if people threw things at him whenever he tried to tell a story.

"But before you come here to what we want to know about," put in several, "and you've either got to tell a story or pay for the drinks every time anybody else tells one."

He moved about uneasily and pushed his chair back from the table, drawing it close up again immediately and finally resting his hands clasped on the board in front of him.

"Well, gents," he said with the wary and dodging look still in his eyes, "let me think a minute. Before I came here I lived in Chicago, where I was hunted instead of hunting. Before that I was in New Orleans, where I only hunted a job. Before that I was in St. Paul, where I was hunting a warm place all the time. Before that I lived in Boston, where it was too frigid to hunt, and before that, quite a long time before that, I lived in old Kentucky, and, gents, I did hunt there. Nothing but a coon, mebbe, or a fox or a possum or as little as an squirrel or only a dove in the dark road, but it was finer than anything on earth."

"I was only a boy, and perhaps that had something to do with it, but I didn't know any different then, like I do now, and it was just the finest on earth and no mistake." And his face lighted up as if he were looking through the open gates of paradise. "I recollect I had a dog that was considerable of a hunting dog, but he was an unrelenting kind of a dog, and when he found anything he would do a lot of barking at first, but if somebody didn't come mighty quick he would give it up and go moseying along after the next thing in sight. One night I was out with him after coons, and about 9 o'clock I heard him bark like he was over in a clump of woods about a half mile away. I know I was going to have to go to him pretty quick, and I started across a field toward the woods as fast as I could go. It was a stubble field with sink holes like you find all over Kentucky in the limestone parts, and the place was dark, though the moon was just beginning to show above the woods. I was thinking more about what the dog had than anything else, and as I went bawling through the field, all at once I seemed to drop off of the earth and fall into a cellar, and then I knew I had tumbled into a sink hole. They are never very deep or dangerous, and I wasn't afraid of being fatally hurt, but it took the wind out of me right quick, and I went down through the weeds and stuff, not knowing just what had happened. Of course I hadn't much time to think, and when I hit bottom I had still less, for instead of lighting on the ground or stones or thickets, I lit on something alive. It was a little animal of some kind, I didn't know what, and I was scared till my hair began to feel funny on my head.

"When I went down, I went hard, and I kind of knocked the wind out of the varmint at first, but in a second it began to yowl and snap and snarl and to twist under me and try to get out and to raise the dickens generally. In the meantime I was yelling and squawking and trying to scare the blamed thing, because I thought it was a wildcat, and I knew a boy of my age didn't have any show with a wildcat if the varmint ever took a notion to fight, and I know pretty well that a wildcat was about as sure to take a notion to fight as anything on earth. I don't know exactly what I did in that hole or how I did it, but I remember it seemed about a month of Sundays that I was all mused up in the hole, and I was all mused up, and finally the thing got under me and scooted as fast as it could for the top of the sink hole. I followed after it as quick as I could, for I became braver when I saw it run, and when I got up on the level the moon had come out, and I could see the varmint fairly skinning it out for the tall timber. I yelled at it with all my might, but I didn't run after it very fast, and began to call my dog.

"On the second call the varmint stopped, and I began to get ready to skin out myself, when I got a better look, and, by the great horn spoon, gents, it was my dog. I called him then, and he came back to me, and I could see for myself that he had holed something down there in the sink, and his barking had been smothered and sounded away off to me, and of course when I dropped in on him unexpectedly like that he didn't know anything about it, and neither did I, and there we was. In any event, gentlemen," concluded the former Comoracker, "that dog come trotting back to me, and when we met face to face in the moonlight he sorter looked at me, and I sorter looked at him, and I don't know which one of us felt most like apologizing. I do know, though, we both knocked off for that occasion, and on the way home we took turn about making along behind each other, me and the dog."—New York Sun.

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