

Poetry.

THIRD MOTHERS.

A LITTLE show leans upon your knee, You tired knee, that seems so true...

JUST POPPY'S UMBRELLA.

By HOPE EVELLETT.

"It is all done now but the ribbon, How do you like it, Aunt Poppy?"

"Well, it is proper handsome and no mistake. The trouble is it's too handsome for an old woman like me."

"Old woman! nonsense! don't begin to talk of being old for twenty years to come."

"I am afraid I should make me look ridiculous. People would think I was trying to make myself young again, and, law me, how wider, Baker's talk!"

"Let her talk, 't won't hurt anybody but herself," said Ellen; "everybody would know it was nothing but a compliment."

"Why, where is my umbrella?" she said in surprise, as she found it was not in the entry.

"Isn't it there? I put it in the hat rack," Miss Grove looked somewhat dismayed as she found the umbrella really gone.

"Betsey must have taken it, by mistake, she's dreadful short-sighted. Never mind, she'll bring it back all right if she can't find it."

"Which, it must be conceded, was rather doubtful consolation."

By a strange coincidence Mr. Haughton had dispatched his agent, business, and when Ellen Mr. Blakeley's shop he was just leaving his office, which, by the way, was exactly opposite. But such coincidences are not unusual among lovers, so they shall not stop to accompany them home as usual.

"Why, I don't want to give it up now, I'm ready. I feel just in the mood for a walk. I'll tell you, Aunt Poppy, let me take the old umbrella that's up stairs in the closet."

"Now you know you'll be ashamed to be seen carrying such an old-fashioned thing through the streets," was the answer.

"I am not enough of a fine lady for that. Besides it is a good, very sensible looking umbrella if it is old-fashioned. I am so proud you never carry it yourself, Aunt Poppy."

"I haven't carried it far over thirty years," was the answer and Aunt Poppy turned and went up stairs.

She soon returned, bringing with her an immense blue cotton umbrella with a white border. The stick terminated in a white ribbon-shaped ornament of black horn in the end of which was a disk of mother of pearl on which was cut in relief the initials of the donor.

"Why, I never noticed this name before; did the umbrella belong to Grandpa Bent?" asked Ellen in surprise as she examined the letters.

"Yes, I took it after he died and brought it over here."

"How carved this name? It is done beautifully."

"A young man by the name of Rufus Jackson, who used to live here in town when I was young. He was a young man at such things. But if you are going to get off before it rains you'll have to hurry."

"The clouds were indeed black and threatening, and grew more so. The thunder had begun to mutter at long intervals and an ominous stillness pervaded the air."

"I'm most afraid to have you go," said Aunt Poppy, rather uneasily.

"Oh! there's not the least danger; if the storm is very bad I'll stay at Miss Grove's until it is over. She'll be glad to have me, for she was scolding me the other day because I did not come often."

So Ellen started off armed and equipped. She had half a mile to go before reaching the village, and the thunder and lightning were rapidly increasing every moment.

With glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes she hurried on. Suddenly a drop of rain fell upon her hand and then another. Stopping a moment to open the umbrella, she heard heavy steps behind her, and turning, she beheld a tall young man, with eye-glasses, hurrying towards her.

"Mr. Haughton!" she exclaimed.

"Miss Raymond, have you room under that umbrella for a storm-pursued wight, who was so foolish as to start out without any? It certainly looks large enough."

"This is patriarchal," said she, with reverence. "You do not often have a chance to walk under umbrellas forty years old."

"Is it possible it is so? I will treat it with the greatest respect. It was built apparently on the principle of the Deacon's wonderful one-hoss shay, that ran a hundred years to a day. It shows no signs of giving out yet."

"No, and Aunt Poppy thinks everything of it. It belonged to her father."

Here the rain began to fall in torrents. By this time they had reached Miss Grove's door, and without ceremony they entered. The noise brought out a great old woman, who exclaimed vivaciously, "Dear me, you must be soaking wet; come right into the kitchen and dry yourselves."

"Thank you, Miss Grove, I should be very happy to do so, but I have urgent business at the office which will not wait. Miss Raymond, if you will lend me the Patriarch I will send Jack back with it immediately."

"Certainly," replied Ellen, "but do not make Jack come while it rains as furiously as it does now. There is no particular hurry for I am going to have here a pair of shoes to be made. That is if Miss Grove will have me."

"You know I shall be delighted," answered that lady, and so with merry thanks Mr. Haughton ventured out again, and Ellen followed Miss Grove into the kitchen. Miss Grove was the milliner of the place; a brisk, bustling old maid, with her widowed sister kept house in the little cottage where they were born and bred. The front room was the show room, and here was displayed the modest stock of flowers and ribbons, hats and bonnets.

Miss Grove and Ellen sat in the kitchen chatting, when Mrs. Stack, the sister before mentioned, who was nurse by profession, entered the room bonneted and cloaked. "How does rain, to be sure, and the cars leave in half an hour, so I shall be obliged to go if you will let me. I only hope it will hold up a little by the time I am ready to start. Is the tea kettle boiling, Asenath? I want a cup of tea before I go."

"Here it is, all ready to pour out. It's a disgrace to have it so hot, so I shall be obliged to go if you will let me. I only hope it will hold up a little by the time I am ready to start. Is the tea kettle boiling, Asenath? I want a cup of tea before I go."

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"Come here, my dear, and kiss your uncle that to be."

"Let me see it," said the old gentleman, taking it and examining the handle. "For my soul it is the very same one. Look here my boy, this umbrella belongs to a friend of mine, and I am going to take it to the owner. Here's something to compensate," he saying he dropped fifty cents into the grimy purse, and rolling the umbrella up tightly, marched off with it.

"You're a game old cod, you are; wish I could find an umbrella every day, if everybody'd pay me for it," was the young man's response. The next afternoon shortly gentlemen, with umbrellas still in hand, walked into the telegraph office to send a message. The operator looked curiously at the umbrella, and then said, "Excuse me, sir, but is there a name carved on the end of that handle?"

"Yes, I wish Bent. What is it?"

"Why, you see, sir, we received a telegram yesterday, stating that an umbrella answering to that description had been left in the cars, and directing that it should be sent back to Podgersville this morning. But they were unable to find it, and we telegraphed this room to that effect."

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