HOW SARAH PAID FOR PEACE.

WITH PICTURES BY C. M. RELYEA.

Turn, good wheel, with humming sound.
The Flying Dutchman.

«IT 'S A SHAME, IT IS!»

IN a corner near my fireplace stands an old spinning-wheel on the body of which two large letters are carved—«D. W.,» the mark of the maker. The wheel is silent and decrepit, its useful days long past. Spin it never will again; yet whenever I look at it standing there in its corner, the foot-worn treadle rises, the wheel hums, and for me spins this:

«OH, Reuben,» said Mrs. Grey, «ef that sight don't make my very blood boil! No, don't you look. Keep yer eyes on the mare, and I will, too; then maybe Sarah will think we did n't see her. Drive fast, Reuben, and *don't* look.»

Reuben Grey fixed his eyes on his mare's ears, and gingerly beat her lazy back with his worn-out whip.

«Say somethin' to me as we pass, Reuben,» whispered Mrs. Grey; «it 'll look more nacheral.»

Reuben's mouth worked foolishly, but no words came.

«Now we have passed her,» said his wife, with a breath of relief, as the buggy jogged on; «but yer did n't say a word, Reuben.»

«To save my life, I could n't think o' anything ter say. I never can when folks come on me sudden.»

«Then you might ha' said that. What I did n't want yer to look at was pore Sarah. Dan'l Whip has got her settin' up beside him on the roof of Mr. Buzzard's house while he 's mendin' the chimbleys. It 's a shame, it is!»

Reuben turned around in his seat to look back.

«Now, Reuben,» cried Mrs. Grey, ‹yer 've done it after all, and o' course she saw yer!»

Reuben was shaking the buggy with his laughter.

«Ef that don't beat all!» he cried. «I heard Dan'l Whip was doin' that to Sarah, but I did n't half b'lieve it. Got her h'isted up there on the roof, sittin' in a chair at her knittin'! Oh, my!»

He beat his knee gently with his huge doubled-up fist, which was no larger than his big heart. «Pore Sarah,» he said—«pore Sarah! An' 't ain't as ef he did it for fondness.»

«Fondness! He jes does it to be hateful, Reuben. I al'ays feel 'bout him jes like I do of a bat, that ain't bird nor beast, but a kinder crawlin' vermin. Dan'l Whip certainly ain't a man.»

«That ain't any fault o' his. He was born like that, Mary, honey—all humped together. I 've been thinkin' these years here lately that he 's been gettin' shorter, an' it ain't onreasonable that his temper should shorten, too. I don' hold Dan'l Whip full respons'ble.»

Mrs. Grey shook her head. «I ain't so sure, Reuben. He 's cute enough 'bout thinkin' up new ways to be hateful. This haulin' pore Sarah up on ter roofs when he 's chimbleys to mend, now, who 'd 'a' thought o' that but Dan'l Whip? The only holiday she had was when he was up on roofs; while he 's makin' spinnin'-wheels at home he has her under hack all the time. What in the world made her marry him I don' know.»

Reuben stretched out his hand to catch a wisp of sweet hay that hung on a low branch. The road was narrow, and ran between intruding bushes. The finger-like twigs had snatched part of its load from a passing hay-wagon, which could be heard rumbling on ahead. Selecting a juicy-looking straw, Reuben took it between his teeth, chewing its sweetness as meditatively as a cow might. He leaned back in the buggy, bracing his feet against the worn dash-board, which showed marks of having thus braced them for years. The reins fell in loops from the horse's neck.

«When Dan'l Whip married,» said Reuben, «folks talked the other way. His body war n't much, to be shore, an' his head was 'bout as big as the biggest watermillon you ever saw, like it is now, an' his eyes was just as squeeched up. But talk! He could talk like a book. We all thought he 'd be a somebody, and Sarah war n't nothin' but a field-hand. She was reapin' in my father's field when Dan'l first saw her. ‹Dan'l Whip,› says my father, ‹what on airth are you goin' to marry a girl out the field fer?› You see how folks felt about it. ‹I 'm sick o' boardin',› says Dan'l. ‹I want a home table. She re'p' like a man, an' I 'm goin' to marry her.›»

Mrs. Grey's soft brows knit. «She 's as strong as a man now, Reuben; that 's what gets to me. Dan'l don't more 'n come up to her waist; she could pick him up under her arm an' walk right off with him.»

«Well, she don't do it, nor nothin' like it,» said Reuben. He lowered his voice: «Mary, did you ever hear that story 'bout Dan'l Whip an' Sarah an' a table? I jes pooh-poohed it at the store when I heard it, but it do seem kinder cur'ous, the way Sarah jumps an' runs an' tumbles over herself whenever Dan'l Whip says, ‹Come.›»

Mrs. Grey pursed up her lips. «Reuben, you know I ain't one to gossip. That I knew this thing for weeks, an' said nothin' 'bout it to yer, shows that. My cousin Lyddy ain't one to gossip either. She ought n't to ha' told her husband, an' then it would n't 'a' leaked out at the store.»

Reuben looked up, his blue eyes full of interest. «That come from Lyddy, did it? Then it 's got to be true.»

«It 's as true as sin, an' more disgraceful. Lyddy says she saw Sarah walkin' roun' and roun' that table, cryin' kinder sof' and wringin' her hands, while Dan'l Whip stood in the middle beatin' her with a leather strap.»

Reuben's jaw dropped. «My goodness, Mary! that 's a' awful thing. Somebody ought to stop it. But what I don' see is why Sarah don' stop it herse'f. What made her walk?»

«That 's what I ast Lyddy. She says at first she believed he must 'a' had her held by a halter; but there war n't nothin' at all holdin' Sarah but Dan'l Whip's will. Ain't that awful, Reuben?»

«Ha-a,» said Reuben, moving his feet uneasily; «it makes me crawl. But Mary, honey, I 'm 'fraid yer 'll think I 'm sorter heartless, for I do think I 'm goin' to laugh in a minute. Sarah she 's so everlastin' big, and Dan'l he 's little enough to have ter crawl on a table ter reach her. Don't you see yerse'f it 's sorter funny, Mary?»

His clean-shaven lip twitched as his laughter came and possessed him. Mrs. Grey looked at her husband unsmilingly.

«I don' see nothin' to laugh at, Reuben Grey. Lyddy was n't laughin' any; she said it was a sight to cry over.»

«What I 'm studyin' over is how Lyddy saw it,» ruminated Reuben.

«Lyddy,» said Mrs. Grey, with a slight embarrassment, «was on her way to see Sarah; but when she got to Dan'l Whip's, an' heard this kinder cryin' sound, she did n't like to knock. There 's a slat out o' one o' Dan'l Whip's shutters on the left side the house, an' when Lyddy once looked through that crack she did n't want to do any knockin'. Don't you reckon it 's water that mare 's wantin', Reuben?»

The mare was turning her head longingly toward the roadside, where a weak little stream, trickling down the hill and under the matted underwood, was led by a split log into a half-sunk barrel. There was no check-rein to the rope-pieced harness. Reuben had only to sit still in the buggy and give the mare her way. As it was a warm day, she drew in the water gratefully with deep, whistling sounds.

«Mary,» said Reuben, turning to his wife, his face working with laughter, «I 've been kinder keepin' somethin' 'bout Dan'l Whip to myself, but I can't keep it no longer. You remember the mornin', a week back, when he came out from town in sech a hurry to see me? Well, what yer s'pose he wanted? ‹Mr. Grey,› says he, whisperin', ‹will you kindly lend me twenty dollars?›»

«La, Reuben!» Mrs. Grey interrupted, «what did he want it fer?»

«That was what I ast him, an' you could ha' knocked me down with a feather when he tol' me he wanted to buy a divorce from Sarah.»

«Sarah!» repeated Mrs. Grey. «Why, she 's the only thing keeps folks anyways decent to him. Dan'l Whip must be losin' his mind.»

«Egzactly what I says to him. ‹Dan'l,› I says, ‹Sarah 's shorely been a good wife to you.› ‹I know,› says he, still whisperin'; ‹but there 's a lawyer parsin' through town, an' he tells me he can make a divorce fer twenty dollars. Ain't that the cheapest thing, Mr. Grey? I 'll never get a bargain like that again,› says he; ‹an' I want you to lend me the money fer it. I 'll pay you back.›

«‹No, Dan'l Whip,› says I; ‹you certainly won't, fer I ain't goin' to lend it to you first. You ought to be 'shamed o' yerse'f,› I says; but I laughed so he went off ragin'. There must be somethin' kinder ridic'lous to me in ev'rything Dan'l Whip does, Mary. I laughed to myself all the week at that, an' it makes me laugh now to think o' it. Buyin' a divorce jes 'cause it 's cheap! Like that stovepipe hat you got fer me some ten years back 'cause it was sech a bargain. It 's been in the garret ever sence, ain't it?» Reuben pulled the flapping felt hat he always wore deeper over his brows, beneath which his eyes twinkled.

«I don' see nothin' alike between 'em,» said Mrs. Grey, stiffly.

Her husband tightened the reins, and «clucked» to his mare. «Maybe there ain't, honey,» he said, as they wound down the riverside road again.

Between the little town of Riverton, which the pair were leaving, and their farm ran the South Branch of the Potomac, brawling, noisy, and rapid, ever quarreling with its banks, too often rising in wrath to sweep over them, carrying destruction for lines of high corn and low-lying wheat-fields. If the South Branch, with its rich alluvial banks and wealth of fishes, was more his friend or his enemy, Reuben Grey had yet to decide. He was thinking of this as he looked down at the waters rushing by on the right side of the road. On the left bank the great gray «hanging rocks» arched high above them, holding in every crevice where earth could gather the hanging plant of the region, its gay pink head drooping and swinging against the gray wall with every wind. A hundred feet beyond the hanging rocks lay the ford, good or bad as the South Branch willed. On this day the ford happened to be kind, but Mrs. Grey breathed more freely as the mare emerged dripping on the other side.

«It seems like I never can get used to that gratin' sound of the wheels on the pebbles when the current gets to pullin' so hard midstream, Reuben,» she said. «The mare 's real frisky to-day, ain't she? Why, whatever ails her now?»

«She 's scared of that thing comin' down the road,» answered Reuben. «W'oa, Molly! It ain't nothin', you foolish woman. I 'm blessed ef I know what it is myself though, Mary.»

Straight down the road a feather-bed, topped by some pillows and colored comforters, seemed to be speeding directly toward them, and with no perceptible means of locomotion; but as it drew nearer a pair of unsteady bandy legs could be distinguished sticking out from the bottom of the pile.

«Oh, my,» said Mrs. Grey, woefully; «I know what it is. It 's Uncle Sam moving into his cabin again.»

As she spoke the object turned, and, wavering like one of those tormented beetles over the backs of which children delight to clasp pea-pods, moved from the road to a tiny log cabin set in the bushes. Through the open door of the cabin, after much backing and pushing, the feather-bed van-

ished. When the buggy passed the door was closed.

«There,» sighed Mrs. Grey; «he 's shut in again for days, I s'pose, an' all his work lyin'. I wisht to mercy your mother was alive, Reuben; or else I wisht she 'd taken off all the old negroes with her. To this day I ain't anythin' but the ‹young mistis› to them, an' they don't heed a word I say. I 'm gettin' perfictly sick of it. You ought never to have let Sam build that cabin, Reuben.»

«Oh, it don't matter any. You take the ol' niggers too hard, Mary, honey. Sam he likes to have a kinder hole o' his own to crawl inter when he gets mad.»

«I don' see how that cabin 's his any more 'n his room at the house is, Reuben. He 's made it outer your timber, an' set it on your land.»

«What 's started him now?»

«There has n't anythin' happened but just what he deserved. He 's taken to lyin' in bed here lately deep inter the mornin', an' when he chooses to get up, Ozalla she *will* cook a red-hot breakfast for him. To-day I just stopped her, an' put by some cold victuals for Sam. He was as impident when he saw the plate! He went r'arin' roun' the kitchen, tellin' me he war n't goin' to make a gobbige-box of his stommick for nobody.»

«I jes hope you ran him out with nothin',» said Reuben, indignantly.

«I had ter; but I always feel as if your mother was lookin' down at me when I scold Sam. I can't bear to interfere with the old negroes, they was here so long before me.»

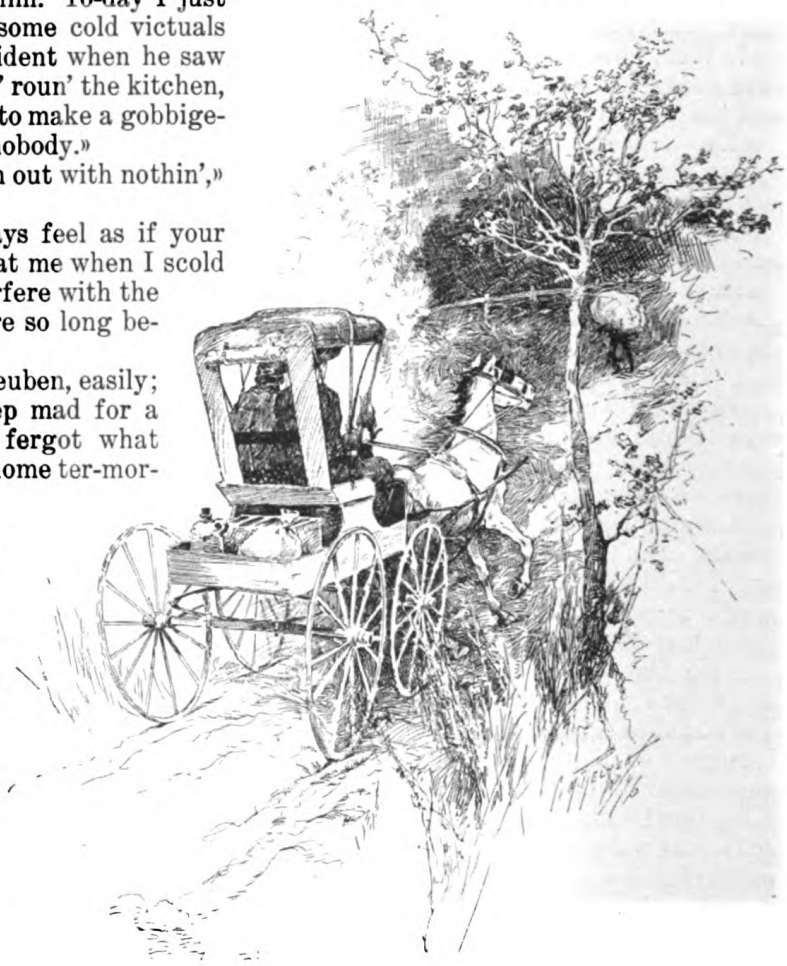
«Makes n' odds,» said Reuben, easily; «I've known Sam to keep mad for a week after he 'd clean fergot what started him. He 'll come home ter-morrow, maybe. The reapin'-machine 's lef' more or less grass over there in that field, Mary, ain't it? I reckon I 'll take that scythe there in the fence corner and trim off the stray locks. I never did think much o' machines, anyhow. You can drive the buggy on to the house. Holler for one of the little niggers to take it when yer get there.»

The horse taken to the stable by a «little nigger,» the locks of grass shorn, and supper in the farm-house eaten, Reuben Gray and his wife sat together happily on the vine-covered porch in the twilight. Down on the river-bank the frogs sang loudly, following their shrill leader. The farm-yard creatures were almost silenced for the night, and Reuben Grey himself was wrapped in content. His feet, clad only in their stockings, were resting on the rungs of his chair, which was tilted back against the side of the house, his pipe was in his mouth, his wife was by his side. What more could man desire?

«Reuben,» said Mrs. Grey, looking up from the knitting which she did not need to see, «I do think I hear somebody hollering at the ford.»

«Reckon not,» Reuben answered drowsily; but as he raised his head to listen, his chair dropped forward with a jerk; he reached quickly for his boots.

«It sounds to me kinder like a lady,» he said, drawing his boots half-way on, then rising to stamp his feet deeper in before he hurried to the ford. To keep a lady waiting was



«‹IT 'S UNCLE SAM MOVING.›»

not in Reuben's code. Mrs. Grey could hear the sound of the pole scraping on the boat, and knew later by the voices on the road that Reuben must be bringing some one back with him. As the two figures advanced through the dusk she could not at once recognize the face of the newcomer, who seemed to hesitate at the steps, as if doubtful of her welcome.

«Here 's Sarah Whip, wife,» said Reuben; and Mrs. Grey rose at once.

«Well, Sarah Whip, I did n't know yer for a minute, I was so surprised. I 'm real glad. You have n't been on this porch sence—I do' know when. Have yer had your supper?»

«No,» answered Reuben; «she ain't had any. Jest get her some, Mary. Set down and wait out here in the cool, Sarah—Mary won't be a minute. Do you take tea or coffee?»

«Coffee in general,» answered Sarah, dully; «but I ain't partic'lar, Mrs. Grey.»

«Mary 's got both,» said Reuben.

He followed his wife, whose hospitality had already sent her to the kitchen. «Mary, honey,» he whispered, «don't you hurry with that supper. Somethin' 's happened, and Sarah Whip 's got it on her min' to tell. Jes let her get through oncet, and make her some strong coffee, pore thing.»

He rambled out to the porch again with a step always purposeless, however direct his aim.

«Well, Sarah, chile?» he said as he seated himself.

Sarah looked up. She was a tall, fair woman with high cheek-bones, gentle blue eyes, and a deprecating expression. Her face began to work suddenly, and she flung her blue apron over her head.

«I knowed there was trouble as soon as I saw you,» said Reuben. «Jes set there and let it bile over, honey. What 's he been doin' to yer 'sides settin' yer up on roofs?»

Sarah rocked her body to and fro, talking through her apron. «I tol' him you saw me on that roof—I tol' him so. I can't stan' it no longer. When I runned out here to the river jes now I did n't know ef it was to th'ow myself in or to holler to you. Then I seemed to hear him runnin' after me, an' I hollered.»

«You oughter 'a' hollered long days before this, Sarah. Now you take that thing off er yer head an' listen to me. I ain't goin' to do any talkin' round to yer, but straight at yer. You tell me ef this thing I hear 'bout you and Dan'l Whip and a table an' a strop 's true.»

Sarah dropped the apron as one trained in obedience, but she wrung her hands and rocked as she poured out her story.

«Yes; it 's true whenever he gets mad at me. I 'm 'mos' crazy with it all. Ef I did n't know jes when he was goin' to do it, it would n't come so hard. But no matter how early in the day he gets mad at me, ef it 's right after breakfast, he don't say not one word till night. He jes waits till after supper, when I 've took the cloth off the table an' folded it an' put it in the dresser drawer. Ef I hear a scramblin' behind me, then I know it 's him gettin' up on the table; nor he don' say a word then, but jes waits for me to turn round from the dresser. Sometimes it 's as much as five minutes, it seems to me, before I kin turn. I jes keep prayin' there, ‹Lord, help me! help me to bear it, Lord!› But nothin' don' help me.» Her voice rose to a wail. «Ef I don't walk right around that table like I know he wants me to, he 'mos' kills me when I do come. Oh, I don' see how I can stan' it any more! I had ter run away ter-night, an' I reckon he will kill me ter-morrow night for doin' it.»

Reuben Grey was moving restlessly in his chair. «Sarah,» he cried out, «you ain't called on to stan' it. Now you look here. I ain' one to run ag'in' Scripture; I 'm believin' the wife should be subjec' to her husband; but, honey, I 've been livin' in this world some time, an' one thing I 've come to see. I 've come to see it so true that I 've done what I reckon yer 'll call awful audacious. I 've made a kinder proverb of it, and in my Bible I 've added it to the proverbs of Solomon—in pencil. It 's jes this: ‹An' the price o' peace may be wa-ar—may be wa-ar,›» he accented with his earnest forefinger. «I ain' tellin' you to do anythin' that 's wrong when I tell you this: the nex' time you know Dan'l Whip 's mad, an' you hear him scramblin' on to the table behin' you, Sarah, don't you pray like yer 've been a-prayin'—‹Lord, help me to bear it!› You pray like this: ‹Lord, help me not to bear this ondecent thing; for the price of peace may be wa-ar, O Lord, wa-ar!› You pray that way, Sarah, an' then you turn roun' an' carry out the will o' the Lord as he puts it inter yer heart ter act. Now the best thing you kin do is to eat yer supper. I hear Mary carryin' it in.»

Mrs. Grey was a good woman. She set the supper on the table, and busied herself about Sarah, watching without a question the poor soul eat and choke, and wipe her eyes. With the good food, the warm coffee, and the warmer kindness, Sarah gradually took heart to relish what she ate. A contagious peacefulness pervaded all of Reuben Grey's surroundings.

«Eat, honey, eat,» he urged. «Mary an' me love to see people eat. Eat till you bu'st—I wisht yer would.»

He laughed himself so heartily that Sarah had begun to join timidly in his mirth when, with a nice morsel half lifted to her mouth, she dropped her fork on her plate.

«What was that?» she asked, trembling.

As the others listened the sound which she had heard was repeated—a cry too shrill for a man's voice, too deep for a woman's.

«It 's Dan'l at the ford,» said Sarah, desperately, rising with a moan, as beaten children turn at call to run screaming toward the fate they dare not escape.

«Sit still there, Sarah,» said Reuben, sternly; «it 's me Dan'l Whip 's callin', an' it 's me he 'll get.»

He stretched out his hand for the flapping hat, and strode from the room. The two women followed him to the porch. Standing there, they could hear through the darkness the beat of Reuben Grey's heavy footsteps on the road, then his powerful voice, «Who 's callin'?»

Every word he spoke came to them clearly. From his replies they could guess at the meaning of the rabbit-like cries from the other side of the river. Sarah grasped Mrs. Grey's arm, a liberty she would not have dared to take at a less crucial moment.

«Yes, she 's here,» shouted Reuben.

The inarticulate cries answered. Then Reuben's voice rose again:

«No, Dan'l Whip; I can't pole over fer you to-night; the boat 's up.»

«I tell yer she is pulled up.»

«Well, I ain't goin' to, then.»

«I 'll drive Sarah in fust thing ter-morrow mornin'.»

«I don' care ef yer do swim; yer won't drown anybody but Dan'l Whip. There ain't no use bleatin' at me like that, Dan'l. I said I won't, an' I ain't.»

«Ef yer do, yer 'll grow to the stone yer settin' on, that 's all. Good night to yer.»

When Reuben returned, Sarah was waiting for him, tremulously standing in the wedge of light which the open house door let out into the dark porch. Reuben came into the light also, his eyes smiling, his head turning from side to side as if in some keen enjoyment. He was holding his closed hand close to his nose.

«Hol' out yer han', Sarah,» he said. As Sarah stretched out her shaking arm, he laid a brown, velvety blossom on her palm.

«There war n't but five shrubs lef' on the bush. I 'm goin' to give you two, Sarah, an' keep three fer myself. Shrubs jes suit my smell. I don' know nothin' that substitutes a shrub after it gets all hot and smelly in yer han'. Come along, Sarah; you finish yer supper, then you 're goin' right to bed fer a good night's rest.»

Sweet, homespun, chivalric soul! Reuben Grey on his mountain-side, hoeing his fields, knew a fine code that only nature had taught him.

The following morning, after the early farm breakfast, the buggy which was to take Sarah into Riverton was brought to the gate before the porch. Reuben Grey's eyes dwelt with full satisfaction on the dilapidated vehicle, the half-groomed horse, and the makeshift harness, but not upon Ozalla's boy, who stood at the horse's head in the place which Sam should have occupied.

«You, Henery? Where 's yer grandad?» asked Reuben.

Henry's already large upper lip swelled with the smile it dared not express. He ducked his head into his breast.

«Grandfa 's down in hes cabin,» he answered.

That Sam was in his cabin, and why, was known to the smallest darky on the farm. Mrs. Grey, who was just within the door packing a basket of fresh eggs for Sarah, stepped out to the porch. Her soft brow was puckered and her kind face troubled.

«Reuben,» she said, «Sam did n't come to the house fer his dinner nor supper yestiddy, nor his breakfast to-day. I declare, it do worry me so. I can't bear to think of anything on this place bein' hungry.»

Reuben laughed at her. «Mary, honey, you *air* so sof' 'bout them ol' negroes. Don't you bother 'bout Sam. Ain't there potatoes in the field, an' ain't he only got to dig 'em? Ain't the chickens walkin' round as tame, an' ain't he only got to knock 'em in the haid? Sam 's a-takin' keer o' himse'f, don't you fret. Air you ready, Sarah?»

Sarah was waiting to bid Mrs. Grey a farewell piteous in its tearful resignation. Mrs. Grey patted her reassuringly on the shoulder with her motherly hand.

«Pick up heart, Sarah,» she said; «an' come again some time when there ain't no reason at all fer it, jes to talk a bit.»

This was her only reference to Sarah's trouble. The mountain folk can show a reserve as fine and delicate as their cliff flowers.

Sarah climbed into the buggy, and, Reuben following her, they jogged down the road toward the unbroken line of green trees that wound through the farms, marking the river-course.

«When Sam and I was boys,» said Reuben Grey, thoughtfully, talking half to himself and half to Sarah, «I kin jes remember worryin' fer a whippin', an' my mother war n't one to spare the rod neither. Many 's the hot switch Sam and me stood up to together. She generally licked us in pa'rs; fer ef one was bad, she could be pretty nigh shore the other put him up to it, ef he did n't do more. But there war times when I 'd get kinder tired, an' did n't want ter go on bein' bad; but havin' got started, I war n't goin' to stop short o' a lickin', an' then I jes wearied fer it before it come to halt me up. I use' t' think, Why on airth don't they hurry up an' lick me an' make me stop? I kin remember thinkin' that as well! It 's helped me a lot in dealin' with folks sence, Sarah. It 's kinder made me tol'rant when they 're too outrageous. I jes think 'bout them ol' days, an' my blessed ol' mother, an' that dear ol' peach-orchard back the house, full o' switches, an' then I says to myself, ‹Don't you be too ha'sh, Reuben; all that pore soul wants is a good lickin'›; an' then, ef I kin, I up an' give it to him, sometimes one way, sometimes another. Now, Sarah, you come along here with me; I got somethin' to show yer before yer go home.»

They had entered the green belt edging the river. The trees, arching over the road, framed in the ford and the farther bank, where the broken road rose again out of the water. Near the ford, set in the dingle, stood Sam's cabin with its sulkily closed door. Reuben Grey flung the reins over the back of his mare, and drew from its socket the stubby whip.

«W'oa, Molly,» he said.

Molly stood quiet while her master descended, followed by Sarah wonderingly. Reuben walked straight to Sam's cabin. He lifted the butt of his whip as if to beat upon the door, then changed his mind.

«Sam!» he called in a quick monosyllable; «Sam!»

As if drawn by an invisible string, an unwilling, shuffling step approached the door, which opened a crack. A white, rolling eyeball peered out. Reuben made an impatient side motion with his head, and the door swung wide, exposing a figure that might have come off the end of a haymaker's fork. Sam's clothing, never neat, was that of a scarecrow; his gray locks were a tousle. He stood with his dark lips swelled out, his head thrust forward, his shifty eyes opening and shutting sulkily. The little white goatee that stuck out from the side of his chin was as crooked as his temper. Reuben scanned him over.

«Well, Sam,» he said, «you do look—»

Sam swallowed resentfully, drawing his features closer together after the manner of a terrapin retiring into its shell.

«You see this, Sam,» said Reuben, raising the whip he held. Sam drew back a step, blinking. Reuben went on sternly: «What I 'm standin' here considerin' is ef I ain't called on right now to haul yer out o' there an' give yer the worst lickin' yer ever had sence yer was a boy. 'T ain't as ef I was hankerin' to do it; it 's kinder hot to be whippin' to-day. But I don' seem able to decide ef I ain't neglectin' a dooty in parsin' it by. There 's jes one thing yer kin be shore of, though: ef, when I come out from town, I stop here an' *do* fin' yer in this cabin, hot nor nothin' else won't help yer. Min', I ain't sayin' I ain't goin' to lick yer anyhow; but ef yer are here when I come out, why, it 'll be right then an' there, an' with this very whip, yer 'll get your lickin'.» He cut the stock through the air in emphasis. «I 'm goin' to hev peace, an' nothin' else, on this yere farm.»

Reuben's whip punctuated forcibly for him once more as he stalked away. He did not deign to turn his head as he moved to his buggy; but Sarah, following with less dignity, saw Sam's exit from the cabin. At a right angle to his master's footsteps, with the swift, loping run of his race, which even in his age he retained, Sam was making for the shelter of the house.

«Look, Mr. Grey,» said Sarah. Reuben looked, and a smile in which there was no surprise and no unkind triumph spread over his features.

«Sarah,» he said, stopping short to speak, «what did I tell yer? Don't you see how the price o' peace may be wa-ar, honey—may be wa-ar?»

Peace had indeed returned to the farm when Reuben came back from his journey to Riverton. The river was sparkling in the sun, his own fields lay smiling before him, Sam was crooning over his work, and Mrs. Grey wore her most placid face. But Reuben himself was disturbed. All through the day this disturbance grew upon him, and late in the afternoon it found utterance.

«Mary,» he said, «I 'm just thinkin' I 'm goin' to ask yer to make supper a' hour earlier this afternoon. I'm considerin' goin' back to Riverton. I feel kinder worried 'bout Sarah an' Dan'l Whip.»

Mrs. Grey laid down her knitting to look

up. «Why, Reuben, it ain't like you to be interferin' with man an' wife. What kin you do ef Dan'l chooses to beat Sarah, and Sarah lets him?»

«It don't seem like I could do nothin',» answered Reuben; «but I reckon I 'd like supper early, Mary.»

«Did n't you say Dan'l Whip war n't onpleasant this mornin'?»

«He was pleasant enough, all but his eyes. He was settin' there, workin' away on his spinnin'-wheels. He did n't say nothin' at all 'bout Sarah runnin' off last night. I 'd 'a' liked it better ef he had. I reckon I 'll have supper early, Mary.»

There was a mild obstinacy about Reuben which his wife rarely opposed. Before dusk he was on his way to Riverton, and he reached the village by the time the lamps began to shine through the windows into the streets. Checking his mare before the town store, Reuben tied her at the horse-rack in company with half a dozen other nags and buggies of similar dilapidation. As he entered the store, ever more or less crowded, answering to the club of a higher civilization, his advent was loudly welcomed; but on this occasion Reuben confessed himself hurried. He ordered a list of groceries, to be packed in his buggy against his return, thus giving explanation for his visit to the populace waiting to receive this statement as their due. His account rendered, he was more free for his mission, which led him at once to Dan'l Whip's home. The Whip cottage stood a little apart from the village, on a side road.

«Here 't is,» said Reuben to himself, as he reached the house and paused before it thoughtfully. All the shutters were closed, but a bright light from within came streaming through the cracks.

«Was it the lef' side Mary said?» murmured Reuben, hesitating on the road. «Yes, 't was the lef'.»

He walked softly to the left side of Daniel Whip's house. There, toward the bottom of one of the windows, a broader band of light burst through the shutter from which a slat was missing.

«Lyddy must ha' seen real well. There war n't no reason she should n't,» thought Reuben, as he bent his head and looked into the house. The one lamp, which was in the center of the supper-table, lighted the small room brilliantly. The china on the shelves, Daniel Whip's half-finished wheels in the corner, his tools near by,—everything, in fact, except Whip himself,—Reuben could see plainly. Directly opposite the window, at the head of the supper-table, sat Sarah.

«White and scared as a rabbit,» sighed Reuben to himself. He looked at the supper, and thought that the poor soul must have made an effort to have it specially good. A high-backed arm-chair was placed opposite Sarah, with its back to the window where Reuben stood. There, he judged, the master of the house must be; for dish after dish was deprecatingly pushed by Sarah toward this chair, and they seemed to disappear in its recesses. Sarah's own plate lay face down before her; she had not so much as turned it over.

No word was being spoken. To the genial soul at the window this was the darkest feature. Finally, the dishes which had been disappearing full into the chair began to come back empty, and Sarah rose to clear the table. She went to her work slowly, with faltering footsteps. When all the dishes had been taken away, she seemed to hesitate, and stood with the center crease of the cloth held in her fingers for a full minute before she jerked it off.

There was still no sign of life from Daniel that Reuben could see. Close by the window stood the dresser. As Sarah approached it to open the drawer and lay the cloth away, Reuben was looking through the broken slat full into her despairing face. She was standing quite still, listening, and he held his breath lest she should hear him. At that moment came a sound that blanched the woman's cheeks and made the watcher's back crawl. It was Daniel Whip scrambling upon the table. Reuben could not see him, for Sarah blocked his view; but he could imagine him standing there, with his «watermelon head,» his «squeeched-up eyes,» his «humped-together body,» the cruel strap ready in his hand. He knew Sarah was mentally seeing the same sight; for her figure was bent despairingly, and it seemed to Reuben that she was looking out through the broken shutter straight into his eyes, while her eyes were growing fixed and strange. Her lips were moving.

«Lord help her!» thought Reuben; «she 's prayin'!»

Suddenly Sarah's eyes lighted up; a dash of bright red came over her high cheek-bones. She wheeled so abruptly that Reuben Grey started back. He heard a scuffle, one rabbit-like cry, and when he regained his post of observation Daniel Whip was not on the table.

Sarah was standing by the arm-chair, looking down into its recesses. She held a heavy

leather strap in her hand, and spoke in a high, excited voice, as mechanically as a parrot.

«Well, Dan'l Whip, you do look!» She went on rapidly, yet as one feeling for words. The thong was raised waveringly. «You see this, Dan'l? What I 'm standin' here considerin' is ef I ain't called on right now to haul yer outer there an' give yer the worst lickin' yer 've had sence—sence—I mean a worse lickin' than you ever give me with this strop. 'T ain't as ef I was hankerin' to do it; it 's kinder hot to be whippin' terday; but I don' seem able to decide ef I ain't neglectin' my dooty in parsin' it by. Min', I don' say I ain' goin' to lick yer anyhow; but there 's jes one thing you kin be shore of: ef I ketch yer again on this table, hot nor nothin' else won't help yer. It 'll be right then and there, an' with this very thong, yer 'll get your lickin'.»

She made the strap whistle through the air as she spoke, and jumped herself at the sound, but went on doggedly:

«I 'm goin' to have peace, an' nothin' else, on this here farm—house, I mean.»

The thong whistled again in her hand; but this time Sarah seemed to find a certain pleasure in the sound, for she repeated it, looking from the stinging lash to the chair.

«Dan'l Whip,» she cried suddenly, «don't you dare to speak or move! Yes, yer may squeeze back in your chair, and stare yer eyes outer your head. This thong 's better to hear than to feel, as I can tell yer. I said I war n't hankerin' to use it on yer, but 'deed I don' know. Now I 'm at the right end o' it fer once, I do seem to feel as ef five or six good licks—now 't ain't no use your sayin' a word, Dan'l Whip; sure 's yer do, I 'll light right in, an' ef I get started I ain't sayin' I *could* stop.»

«'WELL, DAN'L WHIP, YOU DO LOOK!'»

Reuben Grey, at the window, was clinging to the sill in dismay. Sarah had been like some dumb brute unaware of its strength. Now that she had learned her power, it was sweet. The weight of an awful responsibility settled on Reuben's shoulders. Sarah was slapping the strap across her palm thoughtfully.

«When I grabbed you off the table jes now, and chucked you back in that chair, an' yanked this thong outer yer han', Dan'l Whip, what I meant to say by it was this: I ain't never goin' to walk roun' that table to be licked no more, not one time; but I can't be shore 'bout lickin' yer now with this thong—I 'm kinder 'fraid of breakin' yer. You ain' big, like I am. I 'm just wonderin' how yer ma ever done it 'thout killin' yer.»

A sudden thought seemed to strike Sarah. Her face cleared; she turned away, and laid the strap on the high mantel-shelf. «Dan'l,» she said, returning to stand and look down from her height into the chair, «I 've made up my min' clean. I ain' ever goin' ter lick yer with that thong. It 's too crool, an' you so little.» Her tone grew almost affectionate. «I know jes how crool it is. Ef leather did n't

smell so eternal bad burnin', I'd th'ow the thing in the fire once fer all. What I 'm studyin' over now is, ef I ought n't to do yer jes as your ma mus' ha' done yer many a time when you got yer ugly tempers on—jes like I 'd do my own chile ef I had one. I 'm considerin' turnin' you right over my knee an' spankin' yer good; that could n't do yer no harm, an' it might—ach! Don't you speak a word, Dan'l Whip!»

Reuben Grey withdrew from the window as softly as he had come. He stepped from the house to the road, and with the same unnecessarily cautious step he crossed the town, seeking his mare and buggy at the horse-rack. Then he carefully counted over the packages of groceries, to find the number correct. As he drove down the road from Riverton, Reuben Grey was whistling softly and happily to himself.

Whether Sarah decided to spank or to spare Daniel Whip, he had no curiosity to learn. «Anyhow,» he ruminated, «he knows now she kin and may, an' that 's the whole p'int.»

Margaret Sutton Briscoe.

A GREAT MODERN OBSERVATORY.

HARVARD'S ASTRONOMICAL WORK.

COMETS are responsible for many things. During seventeen centuries they gave rise to every sort of superstition and fanaticism, absolutely defying the advance of intelligent thought. In the tenth century comets were supposed to be rapidly foretelling the end of the world; and, while presaging the downfall of emperors and great men, they frequently shone upon illustrious death-beds, perhaps to light an otherwise dark pathway to the other world.

Although a dawning belief in the natural cause of comets seems to have made its way slowly into the still credulous seventeenth century, it was stoutly fought by the ecclesiastics, and popular terror at the appearance of these strange celestial «monsters» had hardly abated, nor were «pestilence and war» less to be feared from the shaking of their «horrid hair.»

But in our own century and country a comet is responsible for something altogether admirable, fanning into constant conflagration a quiet interest in astronomy, which, smoldering for years, might have so continued many more but for its inspiring advent.

The history of astronomy in the United States is coeval with the origin and development of the Harvard Observatory. In 1761, long before an American observatory was thought of, John Winthrop, professor in the college, was sent to Newfoundland to observe the transit of Venus, on June 6 of that year; and in 1780 another expedition, under Professor Samuel Williams, was sent to Penobscot to observe a total eclipse of the sun. While in 1805 John Lowell, an uncle of the founder of the Lowell Institute, made a futile attempt to have an observatory built at Cambridge, no committee was appointed to investigate the proposition until 1815, this being the first corporate act looking toward an astronomical observatory in the United States. Even then, finding the cost so great that the project seemed infeasible, nothing was done for a quarter-century more; but on his accession to the presidency of Harvard, Josiah Quincy took the initial step in 1839 by inviting Mr. W. C. Bond, who for nineteen years had been faithfully observing at Dorchester, to remove his entire interests to Cambridge, and there continue his work «under the auspices of the university.»

Four years later the great comet of 1843 flashed into the New England sky. Irresistibly attracted to the new observatory by this celestial visitor, the people of Boston found it quite insufficient to afford an answer to their eager questions. At once subscribing a fund of $25,000, an instrument of equal size with the largest in the world was speedily ordered in Germany. This is the present 15-inch refracting telescope, with which, on September 19, 1848, Mr. Bond made a genuine discovery—an eighth satellite of Saturn, the New World's first addition to the solar system.

This brief sketch of the early astronomy must suffice. To show the significance of Harvard's work in the «new astronomy,» a glance at the development of celestial photography is essential; and this comes most appropriately, for it is matter of history that stellar photography had its actual origin there.

When, on that July evening in 1850, the Bonds, father and son, had a daguerreotype plate set in the focus of the equatorial as an interesting experiment, and succeeded in ob-