

### A Country Courtship.

Driving the cows from the upper meadow—  
Beauty and Brindle and Bess—  
Now in the sunlight, now in the shadow,  
And now in the wind's caress;  
With song as sweet as at morn the starting  
is wont to the skies to fling;  
Mollie, the farmer's daughter and darling,  
Comes tripping down the hill.  
  
Purple and black are the braided tresses  
Her dairy temples that crown;  
Light is her step on the sward it presses,  
As fall of the thistle down,  
The squirrels peek from the wayside hedges,  
As the maiden moves along,  
And count it chief of their privileges  
To list to her jocund song.

Down where the alders and slender rushes  
Border the rivulets banks,  
And the widened sweep of the water gushes  
Under a bridge's broad planks;  
Whistling a love-song, in broken snatches—  
His hat pushed back from his brows—  
Robin the miller, awaits and watches  
For the coming of the cows.  
  
Up to their knees in the stream, the cattle  
Drink deep of its crystal flow;  
Little they care for the lover's prattle  
Or the bliss the twain may know;  
Their beaving sides with their draughts dis-  
tended,  
They enter the path again,  
And crop the grasses, with heads low bended,  
On either side of the lane.

The shadows deepen; the dew is sprinkling  
With diamonds all the meads;  
And faint and far, in the distance tinkling,  
The sound of the bells recedes.  
Still on the bridge where the water glistens,  
As the moonlight on it falls,  
The miller talks, and the maiden listens,  
But the cows are in their stalls.  
—W. D. Kelly in *Ladies' Home Journal*

### ADOPTED BY THE DEAN.

#### A STORY OF TWO COUNTRIES

For a few minutes after his departure Esperance allowed herself to give way to her overwhelming grief, then controlling herself once more, she paced slowly up and down the room, despairingly, but with the enforced quiet of a strong restraint. She paused for a minute at the window, but the November sunshine was streaming full into the room and she could not look out, her weary sight was dazzled by the brightness; as she lowered her eyes, however, they rested for an instant on her betrothal ring. The sunlight was illumining the raised letters! She read them over and over again, at first dreading, but afterward with a sudden glad realization—"Esperance toujours!"

She twisted the ring slowly from side to side, letting the light play brilliantly on each letter. What memories those words brought to her! She let her thoughts travel slowly back.

Could she disobey his last charge to her? Could she shrink from trembling from what must be best? For a few minutes she knelt in silence, and when she rose the despair and anguish had died out of her face—it was tear stained, but quiet and serene.

Before long she went down to the sitting-room, where she found her uncle and Cornelia. The dean was standing with his elbow on the mantle-piece; he looked up as she entered, then hastily concealed his face. Cornelia made room for her by the fire, and for a few minutes no one broke the silence. She knew that they waited for her to begin, and with an effort she turned to her uncle.

"Did Mr. Moore tell you anything, uncle?"

The dean looked up, and she was touched by the sight of his silent grief.

"You saw him yourself, my dear, did you not?"

"Yes," said Esperance; "and he told me the truth."

"He fears the worst, my poor child—but here the dean's voice suddenly failed him. He turned away, and burying his face in his hands, sobbed unrestrainedly.

Cornelia, afraid that this would agitate Esperance, entreated him to control himself, but the disappointment of this last hope seemed to have crushed him, and he only moaned out sad words of self-accusation, and vain regrets, repeating again that despairing sentence, "The worst—he fears the worst!"

Esperance stood for a moment apart, as if gathering her strength; then she bent down gently and put her arm round the dean's neck, and laid her soft cheek against his wrinkled one.

"It will be God's best for all of us," she whispered.

The dean could not but be comforted by her words; he pressed her hand in silence. Just then there was a quick knock at the door. Cornelia opened it and received a telegram for her father. With trembling fingers the dean tore open the envelope and read the brief lines. It was from Mr. Seymour. Gaspard had already started, and in accordance with the dean's wish would come by the overland route; they might expect him the last week in November.

They told Esperance quietly, and her thankful happiness gladdened the dean's heart. It seemed a ray of comfort in that dark day of disappointment; yet none of them dared to look forward to the end of those three weeks.

Day after day the dean's voice, husky and trembling, asked the prayers of the congregation in the cathedral for Claude Magnay; day after day Esperance watched and waited beside her husband's sick-bed—watched with an intensity of hope, waited trustfully for that which should be sent.

it better not to come to meet you; she is bearing up wonderfully."  
Gaspard asked anxiously for details of Claude's accident and illness, for the telegram had been necessarily brief, and had only furnished him with the leading facts and urgent need of his presence. He listened sadly to Cornelia's account; she could not conceal from him the hopelessness of the case. Very sadly he walked up the steps at the entrance of the hotel, Cornelia led the way to the sitting-room, and he followed down the long, dark corridor. At the sound of their footsteps, however, a door at the end of the passage was quickly opened, the light streamed down the passage, and looking up he saw Esperance in the doorway.

"Cherie!" he cried.  
"Gaspard!" It was the only word which would pass her lips; she let him fold her in his arms, while her tears rained down silently.

Cornelia left them together, and after a few minutes Esperance was better able to feel the full comfort of Gaspard's presence, and yet to both of them there was something inexpressibly sad about his return; the meeting which they had so often talked over, and had planned so joyfully, was indeed different to their expectations. It was not till Noel's baby voice was upraised that Esperance dried her tears and Gaspard's sorrowful face brightened.

"Your little boy!" he exclaimed, "I have not seen him." Then as Noel crawled toward them, with slow but resolute baby efforts, "Why he is a regular De Maillon, eyes and all."  
"Yes," said Esperance, lifting him up to greet his uncle, "I think he will be like our father."

Just at that moment she was called away to Claude's room, and Gaspard was left alone with Noel, who did not quite know what to make of this new arrival; he was beginning to twist the corners of his baby mouth ominously, when the door opened and Dean Collinson entered.

He had greatly dreaded meeting Gaspard, but when he saw his grave, sorrowful face, his courage suddenly revived—the sorrow seemed to unite them.  
"I am heartily glad you have come, Gaspard," he said, holding out his hand. Gaspard made his grave and formal greeting; he could not bring himself to speak very warmly. The old man was for a moment repulsed, but he had grown strangely humble, and he said nothing, only a grief-stricken look passed over his face. Then at once Gaspard's better self returned, he spoke courteously and gratefully.

"I have a great deal to thank you for," he said; it was very considerate of you to send for me, and the journey— He was interrupted. Noel, unaccustomed to his voice, was beginning to kick with all his might, and to hold out his arms to the dean.  
"Ah! you do not know your uncle, *mon enfant*," said Gaspard.

The dean received this new charge rather apprehensively. It was many years since he had held a baby, and Noel was at the most sprightly and troublesome age of eleven months. He was pleased, however, at being looked upon as a friend, and allowed the tiny fingers to play with his long white beard. It was a pretty picture, the hoary-headed old man, and the bright-eyed baby. Gaspard looked and wondered. What would his mother's feelings have been could she have foreseen that her grandchild would have been so caressed by her brother? The dean, looking, saw the expression of his face and guessed his thoughts.

"You think it strange, Gaspard, that I should love Esperance's child, but this boy has been more of a comfort to me than I can tell you; I hope I may be spared to be of some use to him. You have probably been told the reason of my dislike to your father. He crossed my plans, he was poor, he was a foreigner, he unknowingly thwarted my schemes for self-advancement. I see it plainly enough now, though at the time I should have said otherwise, but I was blinded and self-deceived. You are a young man—you can hardly realize what a terrible thing it is to look back on years of self-love and self-indulgence, to see all the harm you have done, to thing of the good left undone. Yet I don't think you are unmerciful—you have been through too much trouble to be harsh in your judgments; and I ask you now not to judge but to forgive me—to forgive the injustice and hardness I showed to your father and mother, and the cold uncharitableness I showed to you."

The color glowed in Gaspard's cheeks, his eyes shone with a bright light, and his face expressed at once surprise, admiration and relief. For a moment there was silence, then he spoke warmly.  
"In the name of my father and mother, I do forgive you, uncle. As for my own pardon, I do not feel that I have a right to use such a term to one so much my senior. You disliked me—I was aware of it, and returned the dislike; necessarily there was coldness between us. I have to thank you now for first breaking the ice."

The dean held out his hand, and Gaspard grasped it in silence, while Noel kicked and crowded lustily, evidently finding the family reconciliation very amusing.  
After this Dean Collinson seemed really happier; though of course the long, wearing anxiety about Claude still weighed heavily on his spirits.

The short December days passed quickly by. The long nights succeeded each other one by one in needless monotony, and still Claude lingered on almost miraculously; the long unconsciousness still remained unbroken.

The last evening of the year came—a still, cold, frosty night. Esperance found it hard then not to fear, almost impossible not to glance on tremblingly at the future. She listened to the cathedral bells as they rang out clearly in the frosty air, and tried to take courage, but never before had it seemed so hard to trust patiently. She had little sleep that night—at last, when her restlessness grew unbearable, she rose and dressed herself, and went to her husband's room, where Gaspard had been keeping watch to relieve the sick-nurse.

He gave her the New Year's greeting sadly. What a *Jour de l'an* was this! She bent down to kiss her husband's unconscious brow, then turned away to the window to hide her tears. The night-lamp burned low; she drew up the blind softly and looked out.

Many times before she had seen the dawn, but never had it looked so beautiful to her as now. Over the hard, frozen

earth there rose the soft, gray, pearly line of morning; far off in the city she could see the faint yellow gleam of the street lamps, while above in brightest contrast, in the midst of the beautiful grayish-green haze, hung the morning star, large and radiant, almost dazzling in its brilliancy.  
Gaspard's voice suddenly recalled her.  
"Cherie, come here!"

She hastened to the bedside. The heavy breathing had grown more quiet, the arms were moved slightly, the eyelids quivered. Gaspard went to summon the nurse from the adjoining room; Esperance waited, scarcely able to breathe for the terrible suspense. Was this a change for life or death? One minute more and the long, long waiting was over! Claude's blue eyes—quiet, unchanged, recognizing, looked into hers! He smiled, and his long sealed lips uttered one faint word—"Esperance!"

The look, the smile, the one word were all she could have—but she was contented. She let Gaspard lead her from the room at once, and in a few minutes he had taken the news to the deanery, and had brought Cornelia back to Esperance. The reconciliation with the dean had long been affected; but even had he not asked so humbly for pardon, Gaspard must have forgiven him all when he saw the intensity of his thankfulness at Claude's restoration. Even Mrs. Mortlake gave a sincere expression of joy, and Dean Collinson was so much agitated that it seemed doubtful if he would be sufficiently recovered in time for the morning service. He went, however, and endured the long New Year's sermon patiently. It was twelve o'clock before the full service was completed, then he hurried off at once to the hotel.

No one was in the sitting-room. He waited anxiously for some minutes; at last Cornelia stole quietly down the passage with a reassuring face.  
"Claude?" asked the dean—he could hardly speak for emotion.  
"He is going on well—the doctors are quite satisfied—only he must be kept perfectly quiet." Then as the dean turned away she continued with a smile, "But we have another New Year's gift, father, to be thankful for!"

The dean turned around half apprehensive, "What! they never told me—"  
"All has gone well," said Cornelia, in a calm, glad voice—"Esperance has a little daughter!"

That day the dean exercised his prerogative, and altered the anthem chosen to the opening chorus from the "Hymn of Praise."  
Some people declared that it was an unsuitable anthem for the New-Year, but they knew very little about it. Dean Collinson's head was bowed throughout; people wondered that he did not stand up, or show in some way that he shared the spirit of the words, "All things with life and breath, praise ye the Lord." But perhaps there had never before been in the cathedral praise more true, and humble, and heartfelt, than that which rose from the hoary-headed dean, who shaded his eyes with his hand lest any one should see the tears of thankfulness which he could not check.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

Claude's recovery was slow, but there were no relapses; he had now nothing but weakness to struggle against, and day by day he made real and perceptible progress. It was not for several weeks, however, that they ventured to let Esperance come into his room; they dreaded the excitement for both alike, and Esperance was obliged to content herself with her little blue-eyed baby, while Claude was able to grumble to his heart's content to Gaspard—the only person allowed to come into his room except the sick nurse. He was the very man to be with an invalid—quiet and ready, sympathetic and yet firm, and Claude found some comfort in his strong resemblance to Esperance.

Every time the doctor came he was besieged by impatient questions—How was his wife, and when might he see her? Esperance's recovery had been very slow and protracted, and the meeting was postponed day after day till Claude's patience was fairly exhausted. One morning he worked himself up into such an excitement, in trying to prove how much better it would be for both of them to see each other, that the doctor began to waver. Esperance had had a bad night, however, and was really not equal to any exertion. Mr. Maclaren would not suggest it to her, but he asked if she would spare the baby.

Claude was still talking fiercely to Gaspard of the folly and uselessness of such precautions, when his door was opened and the doctor looked in once more.  
"Mrs. Magnay sends you a small deputy," he said with a smile, then standing back he made way for the monthly nurse, who walked in with an important air, and placed a small, closely wrapped bundle on Claude's arm. The baby was asleep; he unfolded the shawls, and looked long and earnestly at the little face. It was doubtless much like other baby faces, but to his eyes a likeness was to be traced in every feature. The little, pointed dimpled chin, the small mouth, the well-formed nose, at present almost out of proportion to the rest of the face, the soft, dark, clear skin, and a most unusual quantity of curly, dark, brown hair, very noticeable in such a young baby, all served to make his little girl a very comforting "deputy."

"She will be very like like Esperance," he said, glancing up, and Gaspard fancied there were tears in his eyes, but he hastily stooped down again and kissed the little unconscious forehead gratefully, almost reverently.  
"I believe Esperance has been comforting herself with the small woman's likeness to you," said Gaspard with a laugh. "Time will show which is right, but her eyes are certainly yours."

It was two or three days after this that Esperance was allowed to make her first visit to the sick room. Gaspard brought her to the door, just witnessing the dawning joy of each face, the glow of color which rose to Esperance's cheeks, and the bright, eager welcome from Claude; then he left them to their happiness, and went to see Dean Collinson.

One of the dean's many schemes was to induce Mr. Seymour to part with Gaspard. He could not endure the thought of his return to Ceylon, and he had written some time before to urge the coffee-planter to transfer him to the house of business in London. Mr. Seymour was fond of Gaspard and of course grumbled at the proposal, but it happened that at the time the change was really feasible, Mr. Seymour's younger brother had just

died; Gaspard was fully competent to take his place, and although owing to his want of capital, he could not at present be received as a partner, yet the coffee-planter hinted that in time this difficulty might be surmounted. The salary was a good one, and the dean suggested the change hopefully. Gaspard did not take long to make up his mind. English frogs and vapors with Esperance, and the perfect climate of Dickoya without her, was to him a choice which required no weighing; the decision to stay in England was at once made, and Esperance's delight warmed the dean's heart.

It was while she was talking to him on this subject one afternoon in March that she resolved to speak to him of what had long been on her mind. "You are doing so much to make me happy, uncle," she said with a momentary hesitation, "it seems almost wrong to ask you to do something else, and yet there is one thing which I very much want."  
"My dear!" exclaimed the dean, "let me hear it at once; if it is anything I can do I shall be delighted."  
"I am not sure whether it is," said Esperance, musingly, "but I hope it is. I want Bertha to come to Richester, uncle. I want George and Bertha to be at baby's christening."

The dean paced up and down the room three or four times in silence; then he stopped, and taking Esperance's hand in his, he said, gently, "Yes, my dear, you are right—what am I, indeed, that I should refuse forgiveness to any! I will write to Bertha myself. When is your little girl to be christened?"

"We thought we should like Easter-day, if it will be convenient, uncle. Mr. Maclaren thinks that Claude may go then."  
"And is the name decided upon?"  
"Claude says one name must be Esperance; but we have not chosen the other."  
Then with a sudden thought she continued, "Is there any name you would like, uncle?"

There was a strange hushiness in the dean's voice as he replied, "Yes, Esperance; if you and Claude approve, there is one name I should very much like—your mother's name—Amy."  
Frances Neville, Cornelia and Gaspard were to be the god-parents. The christening had been deferred till Easter on Claude's account, but that was the utmost limit which could be allowed, for Mr. Henderson and Frances were to be married the following week, and Esperance had set her heart on their presence.

"I feel that my heart belongs to you already," she said one day to Frances, who was driving her over to Worthington Hall in her little pony-carriage. "When she is older you will have to teach her all that you taught her mother. I think Maggie is a very girl; we shall all envy her when she has you to herself in the country."  
"Dear little Maggie," said Frances, thoughtfully, "if I thought I should be half as wise with her as Madame Lemercier has been I should be happy."  
"I heard from Madame only last week," said Esperance. "She wrote so happily; her passage is taken, and she goes to Australia to join Monsieur next month."

"Yes, she has promised to stay with Maggie till we come home," said Frances. "We mean to dispense with a regular wedding tour, and to have a few quiet weeks in Cornwall instead; then in the summer Norman says we must all meet down in Wales. Maggie and Kathie will so enjoy being together, and I think you and Claude and the babies ought to come too, it will not feel at all right if you are not there, and Claude will want a change of air by that time."

"It would be very delightful," said Esperance; "but that is looking far ahead."  
They reached the hall as she spoke, and Mr. Henderson, who was staying there, came down the steps to greet them.  
"You remember Mrs. Magnay, Norman," said Frances, "we have already been discussing our next meeting in Wales."  
Mr. Henderson shook hands with her warmly. He had not seen her since her wedding-day, but in spite of all she had been through she had not been much altered; it was the same grave sweet face, only there seemed greater depth in the eyes, and a more patient firmness about the mobile lips.

Frances had much to talk of, and there was a sort of sadness about the visit, because it was probably the last which Esperance would be able to make before the bustle and confusion of the wedding week began. But Lady Worthington reminded them cheerfully that Devonshire was one of the loveliest of counties, and prophesied that before long Claude would have commissions in the neighborhood of Frances' new home.

George and Bertha were expected on the following day—the Thursday in Holy Week. Every one a little dreaded their arrival; even Cornelia, though thankful that her father had sent the invitation, half shrunk from seeing her sister. All passed off, however, better than she had feared. The real joy of having Bertha once more at home overcame the painfulness of the first meeting, and though they were quiet and subdued, they were none the less glad and thankful to be all together once more.

George could not help letting Esperance know how he appreciated her thoughtfulness.  
"From the first time I saw you years ago in Paris, I knew that you were blessed with that rarest gift of tact, Mrs. Magnay, but I did not imagine how much I should be indebted to you in future years. Your visit to-day has thawed us all."  
"Claude's visit you mean," said Esperance, smiling. "It is the first time he has been here since the accident, and the dean wants to show him all the alterations and improvements."  
"I hear the dean is not going to have his observatory rebuilt—is that true?"

"He says he shall not at present," replied Esperance, "but he has engaged a first-rate lecturer to give a course of lessons on astronomy in Richester; and I believe if the people take up the subject at all warmly, he will build another observatory, which may be used by the public."  
"I must say he looks all the better for being without his hobby. I suppose he gets out-of-doors more, instead of being shut up all day studying and spending half the night in star-gazing."

Esperance glanced across at the dean, and smiled. He certainly did look much happier and much less infirm than in former times, but she did not think the

change was altogether owing to the loss of the telescope.  
Easter-day was cold and unseasonable in spite of its being in the middle of March there was snow on the ground, and the east wind blew gustily round the walls of the cathedral, whistling through the louvre-boards in the towers, and seeking for an entrance at the closed doors and windows. But the hurricane with only made the calm within seem more restful, and the fitful gleams of sunshine streaming through the stained glass windows cast a fleeting radiance on the group gathered round the massive old font.

Lady Worthington, standing rather in the background, could watch the faces of those around; Claude, with the gravely wistful expression which his face often bore, stood close to the font, his color rather high, his short, newly-grown hair fairer and more boyish-looking than ever. Esperance was close beside him, looking serene and happy, and with a beautiful light in her soft, brown eyes; while behind them stood Marie, in her fresh white cap, and little Noel with his bright eyes full of grave wonder. On the opposite side stood Frances and Mr. Henderson, Mrs. Lemercier, using her handkerchief freely—Gaspard, with an unusually softened expression on his dark, handsome face, and Cornelia, holding the baby carefully and rather anxiously, with a womanly tenderness and love which she would once have scorned. But, perhaps, in all the little group there was no face which arrested Lady Worthington's attention with such real pleasure as the dean's.

This Easter-day was indeed one of rejoicing to him. It was with mingled humility and joy that he received his sister's little grandchild in his arms, and bestowed on her the name which meant so much to him—"Amy Esperance."

The short service over, the little group dispersed quickly, Mrs. Mortlake lingering to help old Mrs. Passmore into the carriage, and to hear her comments.  
"A most beautiful baby! the finest I have seen for a long time—and so healthy, too!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Mortlake, "a nice plump little thing, but scarcely pretty. Just compare her with Bella at that age! Bella really was a lovely baby!"

Mrs. Passmore did not stay to dispute the point, and Mrs. Mortlake was recalled to the present by finding that Bella was playing at snowballs with Maggie Henderson and the little Worthingtons, to the great detriment of her Sunday clothes.  
There was to be no christening dinner, for Claude was still too much of an invalid to bear any more fatigue that day; it was not, indeed, till the evening that he was enough rested to care even for conversation, but when Esperance had brought him his tea he revived.

"It has not been too much for you?" she asked, a little anxiously.  
"Not the least. I wouldn't have missed it for anything," he replied, with sufficient energy to reassure her. "It was worth a little exertion if only for the pleasure of seeing the dean's face."  
"Was it not bright and glad?" said Esperance, smiling. "And he held the baby so nicely. I could not help thinking as he said her name, how my mother's belief had really come true, and all was being made right at last. I wonder if in Paradise they are allowed to watch the working together of things down here—whether she and papa could see how the poverty and the suffering and the long waiting were all leading up to the reunion which they had so longed for?"

Claude did not speak for a minute or two, but twisted his betrothal ring around, and mused on the motto.  
"You naughty child," he said, playfully, yet with a vibration in his voice, "see how loose this thing has grown!"  
And with that he pressed the little thin hand to his lips, and Esperance smiled—her eyes full of happy tears.

#### THE END.

#### The Cruel Wire.

"I consider the barbed wire fence the most barbarous invention ever given to the world," remarked a horse owner on the mountain the other day to a Times man. These words were used as the speaker was applying a lotion to an ugly gash on the shoulder of a thoroughbred colt that had run against one of these terrible fences. The owner of the colt is Mr. John Clark, proprietor of the Mountain View Hotel. Others beside Mr. Clark have had similar experiences lately. Mr. Marshall, of Glanford, not long since had a valuable horse fatally injured by running against the cruel wires, and several head of cattle have been killed. The hide inspector says that the barbed wire has caused the quality of hides to change considerably. Almost every other hide and skin brought in to market has to be marked No. 2 in consequence of cuts received while the animal is yet alive. Talk about cruelty to animals, but Mr. Black, or Mr. Brown, or somebody should make a dead stand against barbed wire fencing.

#### Her Weight in Pound Notes.

Many parents are apt to consider their daughters worth their weight in gold, but a Scotch gentleman estimated his two daughters' value at even a higher rate than this, requesting to each her weight in £1 notes. The elder seems to have been slimmer than her sister, for she got only £51,200, while the younger received £55,344.

#### No Sign of It There.

"Horses, I hold, have great intelligence."  
"Some of them have. But there was one horse down at the Branch that hadn't."  
"How did he show it?"  
"He ran away with Miss Patter!"

#### A Great Game.

"It is queer in baseball. When a man is released he is no longer leased."  
"And when he re-signs he withdraws his resignation."  
"By George! It's a wonderful game."

#### Social Pastels.

"I don't enjoy dancing," said Miss Passco.  
"I should think you would—the way you dance," put in Miss Ingenue, softly.

The State and local treasuries of Ohio receive \$2,452,500 this year from the saloon keepers of that State.