# THE WOODMAN.

"Nightingales warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee:
Shadows of three dead men
Walked in the walks with me—
Shadows of three dead men—and thou
Wast one of the three."

Tennyson.

Our village, as we have said, stands in a clearing in a woodland country. Below us stretches a great oak forest on its ancient home of clay, and around and above us grow almost every variety of tree. Beeches, with their splendor of autumn coloring, the feathery ash and huge chestnut-trees, not the chestnut only that reminds one in shape of the trees in a child's toy-box, but the beautiful Spanish variety, its trunk curving flames.

There is perhaps no country so melancholy yet so fascinating as a forest country, nor one in which the individual finds his own personality so completely reflected in nature. The dweller in the mountains has ever before him the sense of the unattainable, as the eternal hills disclose themselves fold behind fold; but the forests whisper to you of your own thought; what you left in its charge yesterday you find again to-morrow. Your own thoughts are but hidden among the trees.

The forest is even yet the great fact about our country-side. Down to the year 1700, or thereabouts, the forest had been the Birmingham of England, and even so late as the last century it saw the smelting of iron and the casting of cannon. Now the fires are out, and the forges cold, the forest seems to have reverted to its original uses. A number of small industries have sprung up anew which give employment to the woodlander all the year round, and which furnish work to many farm-laborers, when farming operations are at a standstill.

Occupations are still more or less hereditary amongst the country folk about us, but in no craft is the work carried on so steadily from father to son as in the craft of the woodlander. There is perhaps a feeling that it is an artist's life, something apart from and superior to the ordinary agricultural work; perhaps, too, there is an inherited instinct which draws men to the woods and gives them what seems to the vulgar an almost miraculous power of understanding about trees. The woodlander will tell you, by the appearance of the branches, whether or no a young oak has struck fresh soil, and if so, of what soil; he will tell you, by the appearance of the bark, whether a rabbit, a hare, or a squirrel has caused certain damages. He knows by the soughing of the wind in the branches what manner of tree is near him. But of all this, and much more, may we not read in Mr. Thomas Hardy's delightful book "The Woodlanders?"

We, however, here are concerned with the story of a certain young Asph Halnaker, the tallest, brightest, most intelligent young fellow of these parts. He lived with his widowed mother in a small house in the woods. It was a most romantic spot far away from the highroad, far away, indeed, from any public pathway. It might have stood for the original house in the wood belonging to the mythical "three bears" of our childhood. It was perched at the top of a deep ravine, down which rushed a little mountain stream, and on a summer's afternoon the sunlight flickering up through the banks of larches seemed to linger lovingly on the little homestead. So remote, so solitary, so silent an abode we had never before seen; but Mrs. Halnaker laughed at the notion of silence. The forest, she explained to us, "was full o' company" when you know how to understand it, but "mayhap," she said, "you've only lived among folk."

Asaph Halnaker's father had been a notable woodman in his day, and, though he had never held any official position, his opinion was sought far and near. He had been one of those who in his hot youth had tramped fourteen weary miles at night to bring to our village a new maypole to set up in place of the old. A fine, brave, resolute old man he was when we knew him. Unhappily he had caught the "copse fever," some years back, and every autumn and spring he was down with it, but his fine constitution and temperate habit soon set him up after these periodic attacks. One spring, however, the dread influenza came "atop" as he said, of his usual malarial fever, and, being rining-time, it ate the heart out of him," and so he died, and was buried near the other Halnakers, under the great yew of our churchyard. He left a widow and two sons just grown to manhood.

Mrs. Halnaker had hardly dried her tears and taken up the thread of life again when a second blow fell upon her. Her eldest son, the joy of her heart, and now the chief pride of her life, was brought home to her one day broken and twisted out of the shape of a man. He had been crushed by the fall of a tree and in the hours of life that remained to him his mother had but one thought, could breathe but one prayer—that his cruel sufferings might have an end, and that he, too, might be at rest with his father in the quiet churchyard.

Mrs. Halnaker's sorrow, in its dignity and simplicity, set aside all attempts at a vain condolence. "Yes," she would say, "it was kind, very kind, to try to comfort her, but she alone knew what she had lost." She steadily resisted all the well-meant efforts of friends and neighbours to induce her to leave her lonely house, now darkened with painful memories, and to take a cottage nearer to the village. She, in answer, would only shake her head, and rock herself to and fro in her grief, until one day some would-be comforter persisted over much. Then, rising from her seat, and drawing herself to her full height, "Ye weary me, woman, ye do, with y're talking—'twas their home, and 'tshall be my home! 'Tis hard, very hard, but I'd scorn myself if I could forget. Leave me alone with my dead."

And so the days went on. Mrs. Halnaker found an interest in life in keeping things within the cottage just as they had been of old, when the jolly woodsman came up the glen and whistled to his wife to tell her of his home coming. His chair was always drawn to the chimney-corner, the list slippers were put handy, the old pipe peeped over the ledge of the chimney-board. Little by little Asaph came to understand that in no way could he give so much pleasure to his mother as by sitting in his dead father's chair, and in every way trying to take that father's place. One evening, as he came up the steep pathway that led to the Crow's Nest, footsore and weary with the day's work and a long tramp home, his thoughts were full of his father, and of how cheerily he had always known to beguile the way, if not with much of talk, yet with his robust and sympathetic presence; he remembered, too, the whistle and the nightly, "Well, dame," which seemed to fill the little parlor with warmth and affection. Poor Asaph groaned and almost without knowing it he blew his father's well-known whistle. The sound startled him, and, angry with himself for his heedlessness, he hurried up to the cottage door, where his mother met him and, throwing herself into his arms, sobbed aloud. But Asaph knew that in some mysterious way, he had given her pleasure, and from that day forth the young vigorous whistle rang every evening through the woods as seven o'clock drew near.

It must be remembered that village life in these latter days does not apparently admit of much amusement, and, good mother as she was, Mrs. Halnaker would ofttimes say to her son that it was but a sad life that he led with a lonesome old woman. He must take up with some bright good girl and get married; and, "Zaph," she would say, "remember this: I lived with my husband's mother a many years, and was a good daughter to her, an' I shall know how to be a good mother to your wife when you gets one. As I take no more pleasure here in bein' mistress, so do you bring in a new mistress. I won't never be in the way; the place is big enough for us all."

Asaph had always laughed hitherto, and replied that he did very well as he was—he had no time "to go round courtin'."

His favorite pastime was to go once a week during the winter months to the blacksmith's house on the village green, where the smith and one or two others made music together. The blacksmith played the 'cello, and by a genius for discreet omission in the rendering of the printed text, managed to provide a very respectable bass. The 'cello was an historic instrument; it had descended in the blacksmith's family from the days when, with a violin and a viola, it led the hymn-tunes from the old church gallery. The smith had taken unheard-of pains to learn to play upon it, and had almost given up the attempt in despair when a musical friend suggested to him to paint a long, deep, white band on either side the strings, and with dark lines mark the scale. It cost immense labor to get this done, but it enabled the smith to play certain tunes in certain keys, and, as I say, the 'cello always proved to be a very respectable bass in the village quartettes.

One day in early spring, when the air rang with the songs of birds and all the country-side was gay with blossom, Asaph came home somewhat earlier than usual, and prepared himself evidently for a formal event. The winter practices had come to an end, but they were to result in a concert, a real concert, which was to be given in a sort of barn at the back of the smithy, and it had been suggested that, with all the instruments at hand, it would be right and proper to end the evening with a dance.

"Zaph" Halnaker looked a fine figure of a man as he hastened down the steep path, dressed in his best, for the village merrymaking. He was tall—"a good six feet," he laughingly would say, "in the morning"—broad shouldered and straight limbed, and his head, well set upon his shoulders, was covered with clusters of dusky fair hair. His features were not strictly handsome, but his clear, open blue eyes and frank, pleasant smile gave him a title to be considered the best looking young fellow of the village. He was dressed on this occasion in a round coat, a bright colored waistcoat, leggings—apparently he would hardly have known how to stand upright without his leggings—and a new blue tie, of whic the ends hung loose. His moth watched him with pride and somethi like a new joy at her heart as swung down through the woods, ca rying his violin in a bag upon h arms.

But his mind was intent upon oth business beside music that fine sprin evening. On the brow of the hill, whe the road turns to wind through the v lage, stands a farm, a homely o world place with high roofs and impor ant stacks of chimneys, the whole no touched to russets and crimsons by t setting sun. What garden the was was stocked with spring flower but the great glory of the front co sisted in a hedge of lilac. The gre tassels of bloom hung heavily in ric clusters upon the dark green foliag and mounted on a low wooden sto with arm outstretched to pluck th lilac and eyes turned upon the roa stood a young girl. Her sun-bonne had fallen upon her shoulders, and he round, soft arm, from which the cotto sleeve had been thrust aside, lay whit among the flowers, the fairest may blossom of them all. She hastil jumped from the stool as she caugh sight of Asaph, not, however, before h had seen her and had asked permissio to come inside the gate.

"What! Master Halnaker, goin to the music?" said she.

"Yes," he replied; "but there's tim enough for that. Mayn't I just come i and help you gather the laylock? I'v been wanting to see you, to tell you a I'd got a bird for you o' mother's ow breeding. If it sings like its father, i should make a deal o' music in th house. But, Mercy," he continued, i more earnest tones, "you have some'u to say to me first. I've got the job u by Absters, and that'll put a good bi o' money in my pocket, and I've planned it all so as to spend nothing when I'm away; and now that is so, Mercy dear, and the house is all ready, and mother so anxious, won't you say you'll be mine, and let me go and tell y're father? I know that you're above me, and that, mayhap, y're father will be lookin' higher for ye; but ye'll never find a man to love ye better, an' I'll wait on ye, an' learn o' ye, and Mercy dear——"

How it was they never knew, but Mercy dropped an apronful of great branches of lilac, and found herself gathered into Asaph's strong arms and her head upon his shoulder.

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The course of true love never did run smooth, and, favorite as he was of the country-side, Asaph had his difficulties. Mercy's father expected her to marry money and keep a maidservant, to have farm-servants under her, and to be a thriving farmer's wife as her mother had been before her; but Mercy was his favorite child, and there was no denying that young Asaph was a credit to the place, and might in time become a man of importance and command in the woods. So a somewhat reluctant consent was won from the parents, the marriage was to take place early in the next spring, and Mercy was to spend the long days in sewing for her new home, while Asaph went up to Absters for the copse work.

Once or twice in the autumn Asaph came home, but it was a long tramp from Absters, and he resolutely denied himself the hire of any sort of conveyance however humble. The folk in our village are not given to letter writing, and, though Asaph so far forgot himself as to send one letter to his sweetheart, it would have been considered beneath his dignity, as a man of sense, to write oftener.

Mercy hemmed and sewed, and stitched and blushed, as she put in the red letters on the household linen which joined their names together—and so autumn and winter came and went. The weather was chill and very dry, when one day in early spring a rumor came to the village that a man was very ill—of fever, so it was said—up at Absters, and that there were children down with it, too. The nearest doctor was communicated with, and he, saddling his horse, at once rode up.

Absters is the name given to a straggling collection of rough houses on either side a green lane. It can in no sense be called a village; there is neither church nor school, nor, more wonderful still, public house. The whole hillside is dense forest, but on the edge there is a clearing running for about three quarters of a mile, with scattered houses on either side the green way. The houses are not regularly inhabited; the population is a wandering one, the whole place, though strangely fascinating, is lonely and very wild.

When the worthy doctor arrived he inquired first after the children, and found that several of them were down with typhoid fever, fortunately, as it seemed to him, of a mild type. He had almost forgotten the existence of the supposed adult patient when a big lad ran to tell him "that the man was took very bad like."

The doctor asked to be taken to his quarters, and was greatly surprised to be told that he had no quarters, and that he could not see him.

"No quarters!" said the doctor. "Why, where does he lodge, and, pray why can't I see him?"

"Well, dy'er see, it's this way," said the tall lad; "many of our folk in the forest they don't lie o' nights in houses; and this chap he was doin' it on the cheap for his marriage, and so he just took a fox hole and there he be, and there he mun bide, and ye can't get to see him."

"Good heavens!" shouted the doctor; "but I must see him—take me to the place."

The lad accordingly led the way off the main track to where a deep cutting had been made for hauling timber, and there the sand-banks lay high and steep. Looking up he saw what the boy called "fox-holes," but which, in truth, looked much more like the nests made by some gigantic form of sand-martin. Each hole was sufficiently wide to enable a man to creep in on all fours, and was deep enough, he was assured, inside to enable him to stretch himself at full length. Rude beds, indeed, but protected from wind and weather, and warm in the sheltering sand.

"He's in there," said the lad, pointing to one of the largest of the holes, "an' he's very bad; he cries and moans something fearful, but ye can't get in."

"Can't I," said the doctor, and stripping off his coat he prepared to climb the bank.

"It's very narrow," he exclaimed, when his eyes were on a level with the hole, and he could see something like the dark form of a man lying inside; "but I'm only a little one"—and with much care and precaution he crawled over the poor helpless body. When after two or three moments he reap-

would s
"as it was his father whistlin'. I thought it must be for me, but it was him he wanted, an' I think it can't be very long now before he calls me, too."

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Conductor (to traveler who has just lighted a cigar)—You are not in the smoking car, sir.

Traveler (complacently)—I know it; I never go into one; it always makes me sick to go where others are smoking.

# THE HOME.

## AN EPICURIAN ODE.

There is soulful zest in a plover,
And the man is not badly stuck
Who tears the canvas cover
From off a canvas-back duck,

And just a single word to the wise—
It's a lucky day for you
When you pick up the terra-pin that lies
In the rich and savory stew.

And the reed bird (who isn't a sparrow)
Has a sweetness all his own,
As sweet as the splendid marrow,
In the depths of a well-grilled bone.

But these dainties are rank and bitter,
And their finest witchery pales,
In the light of the golden glitter
Of the rabbit that comes from Wales.

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## GAME AND ITS TREATMENT.

The care of the game larder is a serious addition to the housewife's cares. An important question with all game is that of keeping, for on it in a great measure depends the goodness of the birds. An overhung wild duck becomes a horror; whereas a pheasant if not well hung has not so much flavor as a good fowl. The older a bird is the longer it will have to hang if it is to be eatably tender. The length of time this hanging can last must depend on the taste of the consumer, on the weather, and the age of the bird. As a general principle, it is pretty safe to take about a fortnight, though under favorable conditions they will keep good for a much longer time.

A game larder should be in a cool, dry place, and a current of air is indispensable for the safe keeping of game. Care and attention are required regarding the weather, for a sudden change from frosty cold to muggy damp will be sufficient to "turn" game almost at once. Another point is to leave the game as long as possible unplucked and undrawn. When these processes are necessary the bird should be cooked directly.

The experienced housekeeper can tell the bird's age by its plumage, etc., but for the ignorant the safest test is to lift it by the lower beak, which when the bird is young will snap off short; with all young birds the legs are smooth and the quill feathers short. When in condition the breast will be hard and firm, and well covered with flesh. As a general rule the hen birds are the most tender and juicy. When preparing game for cooking it should never be washed inside. When it is in a state to require washing to make it fit for the table it is not in a condition to be used. Woodcock, snipe, golden plover and landrail are not drawn. Such birds should be trussed with their heads on, the same rule being often applied to the black cock.

Game of all kinds requires careful cooking for though it should rarely be underdone, if overdone it dries and toughens very quickly. Wild duck, teal and widgeon are the exceptions, and should be distinctly underdone. Whenever possible, game should be roasted at an open fire, but where the oven is used, the birds should be placed in a double roasting pan, with water between the two pans, and extra care must be bestowed on the basting, a point often forgotten by cooks. Most game is improved by having a slice of fat bacon, cut in rows of diagonal slits, strewed over the breast, and in the case of quail, ortolans and other small birds a vine leaf greatly improves the flavor.

Really good game is so fine in flavor that in the eyes of a connoisseur it is little short of a crime to serve it in any way but roast or boiled; still where there is a plethora of game, or old birds have to be used up, it is well to remember that game soup and pie, with the addition of mushrooms, ham, oysters, etc., are both toothsome and easily prepared. Recipes for the preparation of such dishes are given in every cookery book, and it is not necessary to repeat them. A dish very seldom seen may be mentioned, which is nothing more than the well-known "hotpot" made in absolutely the same way as when prepared of beef or mutton. For old birds the French dish, "Perdrix aux choux," can be confidently recommended.

Cold game can be rendered very appetizing by being cooked with good brown game sauce, stiffened with aspic jelly or plain melted gelatine, or with tomato aspic or as a mayonnaise, with an accompaniment of salad of any sort, and a garnish of hard boiled eggs, anchovy fillets, stoned olives, etc.

The usual accompaniments of simply cooked birds are fried bread crumbs, bread sauce and gravy, none of which should be put into the dish with the bird. To these may be added the slices of fried bread on which the bird is often dished, and the seasoned watercress which is so often used as a garnish with roast partridge, quail or pheasant.

For birds which are served undrawn the slice of fried bread is a necessity, and should be placed under the bird while cooking to receive the gravy which exudes from it. Sometimes hot buttered toast is used instead of fried bread, but many object to this on account of its extreme richness.

Either crumbs or bread sauce badly made is sufficient to spoil the dish. For the crumbs rub a thick slice of bread freed from crust through a wire sieve on to a baking tin, adding one ounce of butter or clarified dripping for each half-pint of crumbs; set them in the oven until the fat is absorbed, stirring it occasionally. The crumbs must be brown and crisp. Drain them on a piece of kitchen paper, before the fire, dust them lightly with a little pepper, and serve in a hot dish.

For the bread sauce boil up half a pint of milk with a small shallot stuck with a clove, and directly it comes to a boil stir in one ounce of fresh butter, and two ounces of fresh white bread crumbs, previously rubbed through a wire sieve, and let it all boil together for about fifteen minutes. Then add a couple of spoonfuls of cream or milk, boil it for five minutes, season to taste, remove the shallot and pouring any hot sauce into a tureen or pouring any hot sauce int oa tureen or boat, the latter should be thoroughly scalded out to insure its being sufficiently warm not to chill its contents. Inattention to this rule is often the cause of failure in sauces.

The water cress should be thoroughly washed, gently dried or well shaken, sprinkled with oil and vinegar, with a seasoning of salt and black, freshly ground pepper, and well tossed to insure its being equally covered with the dressing. It should be broken up into neat pieces. Quartered lemons, or limes, and cayenne, or preferably either Nepaul or coralline pepper, should always be handed with roast duck or teal.

Pheasant is best when plainly cooked, though old birds taste better braised or boiled, and served with stewed celery, soubise or chestnut sauce.

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## FOR THE COOK.

Sausage Meat.—Take three pounds of lean fresh pork, and one half pound of leaf lard. See that all is free from sinews, gristle, and bits of bone. Chop all very finely. (A chopping machine costs very little, saves time and labor, and does the work better than it can be done by hand.) —Add two spoonfuls of salt, half a spoonful of pepper, two large spoonfuls of powdered sage, and half a teaspoonful of ground ginger. Mix all together well and put into strong cotton cloth bags twelve inches long and four inches wide when laid flat. Rip the bag open, turn it back and cut the sausage in one inch slices.

Head Cheese.—Clean the head well, and having taken out the eyes, boil, well salted, till the bones easily drop out. Then drain the meat, and season with the various herbs, till the taste is satisfactory. Chop all very fine, and add eight large finely rolled crackers. Sage and sweet marjoram are generally used, besides salt and pepper. Put into moulds and press for two or three days. It is to be served cold, cut in slices.

Savory Meat.—This is made the same as head cheese, only the cracker crumbs are omitted, and yellow cornmeal is stirred in instead. The meat, however, is returned to the liquor in which it was boiled, and all this is made quite thick with the cornmeal, and all slowly cooked for an hour, then poured into a large bowl to cool. To serve, cut in slices and fry brown and crisp. This is an especially Western dish and will keep a month in cold weather.

Peas Pudding.—Cover a half pint of dried peas with a quart of water and soak over night. In the morning, drain off the water, cover with fresh cold water, bring to boiling point and simmer for about three quarters of an hour, until the peas are tender. Then press through a colander. Add to them while hot, a tablespoonful of butter, teaspoonful of salt and dash of pepper. Now, put this into a bag and tie tightly. Put the bag in a steamer and steam continuously for one hour. Just before the time of serving have cut into very thin slices, with the grain of the onion, four good-sized onions. Shake them apart, put them into the frying basket and plunge them into smoking hot fat. In a minute they will be dry and crisp. Turn into a colander and dust with salt. Dish the pudding, put over the onions and serve.

Cream Cake or Pie.—One cup of sugar, two eggs, a piece of butter the size of an egg, two and one half cups of flour, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one cup of milk. Bake in two pans and split when cool. If granulated sugar is sprinkled over the top it will form a nice crust. Cream for filling: One and one half cups of milk boiled and made very sweet. Thicken with six teaspoonfuls of corn starch which have been dissolved in a little cold milk. Add two well beaten eggs and a little salt and cook it slightly. Flavor and spread between the cakes.

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## SELECTING THE TURKEY

A turkey that has been killed a day or two and kept on ice shows a wrinkled, dry skin, split open in many places. For tenderness there are three infallible tests. The first is the flexible condition of the bit of gristle that lies under the skin at the point of the wishbone. The second is by easily breaking the under bill, and the third is the size of a small bony knob that appears on the back of the leg, just a half inch above the foot. All these tests can be personally made, and if gristle and bill are tender and the knob on the leg no larger than a small pea the turkey was of last spring's hatching and will carve like cheese.

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## THR FIRST TOOTH.

"Orlando," she exclaimed, "the baby has a tooth!"

"Has he?" was the response in a tone which betrayed no emotion.

"You don't seem a bit surprised."

"I'm not surprised. All babies have first teeth. If this one didn't have any I'd manage to get up some excitement, maybe."

"I thought you'd be pleased and happy about it.

"No; I don't see that it's any occasion for especial congratulation. The baby has my sympathy."

"Sympathy! What for?"

"For having his first tooth. He has just struck the opening chapter of a long story of trouble. Pretty soon he'll have other teeth."

"Of course he will."

"Every one he cuts will hurt him. Then his second teeth will come along and push these out. That will hurt him again. Some of the new ones will come in crooked, like as not, and he will have to go to the dentist and have a block and tackle adjusted to them to haul them around into line. Then he'll cut his wisdom teeth. That'll hurt him some more. After that he'll have to go to the dentist and let him drill holes and hammer until his face feels like a great palpitating stone quarry. I wouldn't want him to go through life without teeth. But I must say that I don't see any occasion for the customary hilarity over an event that means so much in the way of sorrow and humiliation."