A Romany Wife.

In the low-ceiled living room of a small thatched-roofed cottage standing on the border of a Suffolk heath a woman sat alone by the side of a wood fire, which gave out the only light that relieved the gathering gloom of a winter's night. The occasional gleams that lit up the walls when an unburned branch fell amid the ruddy embers revealed that the room was sparsely furnished with cheap new chairs and a table such as would be within the means of purchase of a laboring man who found regular employment in the farmyard and the fields. Their newness was painfully obvious; it was plain that every article in the room had but lately shed the rough straw wrappings of the dealer's store. The figured oilcloth on the table was so shiny that it reflected the firelight; the chairs had an angularity that suggested the impossibility of a person comfortably conforming to their rigid outlines; the unlit lamp, with its gaudily painted globe and pedestal, seemed meant for tawdry effect rather than use. If one might judge from the face and attitude of the woman she was conscious of the incongruity which existed between these garish objects and the smoke-stained plaster walls which contained them, for she had turned her back upon them and was gazing moodily into the fire.

The incongruity of taste displayed in the furnishing of the room was emphasized by the presence there of the woman herself. A glance at her was sufficient to compel the conclusion that she was as out of place in that weather-worn cottage as was the newly bought furniture the contiguity of which she was trying to ignore. There was something in the expression of her face when the firelight fell on it that suggested some captive creature looking out through prison bars on the scene of its vanished freedom. It was a swarthy face and a hard one, but the dark eyes, with pupils scarcely contracted by the dim light were restless, and revealed a faculty for fierce pleasure and pain that nothing else about her betrayed. A mass of dark hair was gathered closely about her head, without a hint of any attempt at adornment, and her dress was that of a farm-hand's wife who might at times find work in the fields. But neither her attire nor the fashion in which her hair was done could hide the fact that the woman was of Romany blood unmixed with any alien strain.

It had been a stormy day, and all through the daylight hours the sky had been obscured by a murky cloud-wrack, which came up from the westward and swept swiftly over the brown heath and out over the grey sea. Sitting silent and alone the woman could still hear the wind wailing through the ragged fir edge that bordered the heath; at times, when a violent gust seemed to lift the loose roof thatch, its sudden shock upon the cottage walls drowned the distant roaring of the waves. Now and again some dried leaves from under the garden fence were blown against the window panes, but the woman did not turn her head, and such startling sounds were soon unheard amid the loud beating of a rain squall.

"The 'gries' won't stray far from the camp to-night," she muttered to herself, as the wind rattled the window frame, and an air eddy, which found its way beneath the door, scattered some of the sand that was sprinkled on the floor.

She was thinking of the life she had abandoned, of the time when, with the Romany folk of her tribe, she had encamped on the heath under the shade of the very firs which were now spreading their dusky boughs seaward before the storm. Some of the gypsies were camped there that night, but none of them had come to see her; they looked upon her as an outcast, unworthy of intercourse with their tribe. Only Reuben Lee—"Watcher Lee," as the keepers called him—had had a word to say to her. Her mother had refused to open the door of her van when she knocked for admission—she had seen her close it as she crossed the heath—and when she had looked back as she turned away, her sister Elvira had laughed mockingly at her from the steps of her husband's van. Almost wild with rage and mortification she had stumbled against Reuben near her cottage gate, and he had asked what ailed her. Was she not happy with a house-dwelling husband? Didn't the 'gorgio' treat her well? Was she tired of living the respectable life of a plow-driver's wife? Did she wish herself back among the rascally roving crew who cheated servant girls out of their wages and swindled farmers into buying worthless 'gries?' Reuben had been in Yorkshire when she ran away from the camp and married the slow-witted farmer's man, who was smitten with her dark eyes and saucy looks; but her people had evidently told him all about her, for did he not fling back her very words in her teeth? But then he had seen how his words hurt her, for he had changed his tone and spoken to her softly, begging her to leave the life for which she could have little liking, and take up again the old free, roving ways.

A defiant mood had come upon her as she listened to his bitter words but it had been hard to resist him when he spoke tenderly and gave utterance to thoughts that had often of late come to her as she sat in the dusk alone, night after night the craving for the old life had seized her; each time it had gained a fiercer hold, and she knew what the end must be. And now again she asked herself: What was she doing among the fettered house dwellers of a poverty-stricken hamlet—she who was of true Romany blood, and to whom freedom to wander where she willed was the very breath of life? How could she let herself be chained to the hearthside of a boorish laborer, who kept her there because she was able to cook his food and mend his clothes? She had come to him in a fit of pique after a quarrel with her people, and he had been only too glad to have her for her handsome face; but he, too, had changed of late, and had often come home sullen and curlish because the village women had ridiculed him for marrying a gypsy wife.

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Something that sounded like the tapping of fingers at the window at length aroused the woman, and she opened the door and looked out into the night. The force of the wind as it swept into the room drove her back for a moment, and she was obliged to cling to the door for support; but it seemed to awaken her from her reverie, and she stretched out her arms and drew in deep breaths of the chill night air. How good it was! The smell of the earth and of the autumn's fallen leaves seemed to come with it from the fields and coverts beyond the heath. There was the camp fire, too, still burning under the shelter of the ridge; surely she could smell the smoke of the smoldering twigs! A dark shadow obscured the flickering flames, and she knew that one of the men was seeing that the horses were safe for the night. The gypsies were starting for the south in the early morning—Reuben had told her that—and they would not return to Suffolk till next summer. They were free to go where they pleased, but she——

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Half an hour later the cottage door again opened, and the woman stole quietly out into the darkness. She paused on the threshold and gave a glance backward toward the table, where her husband's supper was laid and the lamp was now lit. By its light it could be seen that she had put on a dress of ruby velvet—it was the one she wore when she ran away from the camp—and her shoulders were wrapped about with a bright-colored shawl. She had put on, too, a velvet-trimmed hat such as the Romany girls favor, and its large grey feather blew about in the wind. Her hair hung down in glossy black curls; she had heavy gold earrings in her ears, and, instead of the single gold ring that had encircled her third finger she wore three heavy rings with flashing brilliants. She was a Romany lass again, and she gave a reckless laugh as she closed the cottage door.

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Before dawn, Reuben Lee's van had left the heath. He had roused his brother during the night and told him he had changed his mind and was going to travel again the northern round. He would meet him again in the spring.

Josh Lee, who had caught sight of a moving shadow in Reuben's van, grined behind a hand that might have hidden a yawn, and said:—

"All right; there's gries to be bought cheap that road, no doubt, and the Tykes and their wenches have always got silver for a handsome lass who can tell their fortuned."

MME. LILY LANGTRY.

Since Mme. Lily Langtry has again received attention from the Prince of Wales, the fashionable set in England are quite ready to welcome her back to the fold. It was a remarkable case of good luck that the Jersey Lily bought the noted Australian horse Norman just a few weeks ago, and as good fortune would have it, Norman won the most coveted prize, the Cesarewitch stake. In addition Mrs. Langtry won $250,000, her return from $50,000 she had invested. While the fair Lily was having a banquet in honor of winning, news was received that her husband, Edward Langtry, was dying in an insane asylum. As Mrs. Langtry has for some time past had so much trouble about securing a divorce, the one which she obtained in California, having been declared illegal, the death of Mr. Langtry removes the last barrier to her marriage to Prince Esterhazy so no doubt before long "The funeral baked meats will furnish forth the marriage feast."

By the way, the Jersey Lily has had a checkered career. Every one is not aware that she was at one time the reigning belle of the Island of Jersey, She was Emily Le Breton. When she became the bride of Edward Langtry her trousseau contained but 12 gowns. After they moved to London she made friends with the swell set. It was the Prince of Wales who first called her the Jersey Lily. Loudoners raved over her beauty, and poets chanted her chorus. It was rumoured that she became too familiar, played a trick on His Royal Highness, in other words let a small piece of ice slip from her fingers right down the back of the Prince of Wales. The temperature of her place in society cooled at once. By way of "divertissement," Mrs. Langtry took to the stage. She was a success in England, but far more popular in America. Part of her money was invested in a yacht; she also fitted up a palatial home in California, situated upon her own mammoth ranch. Then she tried in various ways to shake off poor, inoffensive Mr. Langtry. One of the last things he is reported to have said concerning her is, "She shall never untie the knot her father tied at the altar." Some people declare he went insane from worriment over domestic affairs. On the other hand he had become terribly dissipated.

AGRICULTURAL

TREE PRUNING AND CULTURE.

A reader asks for advice about treating an old orchard. Can all apple trees be trimmed alike? Some of his are full of shoots, running up everywhere. Can pear trees be renovated when scabby and old, asks another? And a third wants advice about his maple trees that are dying. Such questions are constantly coming in, writes Mr. Powell. I will try to give a succinct reply, because it is all important that our trees shall be better cared for and better understood by the people. I am told that every Japanese is a natural-born horticulturist. Our people lack tact with trees. A neighbor goes out with an axe and hews off limbs. Another cuts suckers off two inches from the limbs, leaving stubs everywhere—and he professes to be a tree trimmer. But most let suckers grow till all the life is sucked out of the old limbs and the trees are masses of decay.

First. Keep your trees trimmed from their beginning. Let no superfluous wood grow. It uses up and wastes vitality. Besides, by and by, if you have to cut off old and large limbs you will not easily get the stubs healed over. Suckers include all the shoots that come up about the trunk, and those that come out on the trunk. Look once a year all up and down the main limbs for the straight end whips of young wood and off with them.

Second. Cut smooth, with a knife, as far as possible, instead of a saw; but if you use a saw use a sharp knife afterward to smooth over the rough cut. Cut or saw on a plane level with the main limb and as close as you can without marring the limb. There is what we call a collar about each shoot or branch; cut close to that. It is of immense importance that you do clean, smooth work. If you must cut a large limb smear the cut with paint or oil.

Third. Go over all your young trees in mid-summer, and with a small pocket knife or with your thumb nail cut out and pinch out all that you see or can reach of superfluous shoots. This makes an annual pruning, and an annual hunt to avoid the need of pruning. The pruning should be after the leaves are off in fall or in spring. Many trees will hardly need to feel a saw for a quarter of a century if watched. It does not pay to plant trees you do not and cannot watch.

Fourth. Shape your trees as they grow; that is, open the head to light and air. Only remember that some trees naturally grow very erect, and some spread out very widely, and some form round heads. You must not try to force all to grow alike. A Seckel pear is a round head, so is an Astrakhan apple. A Buffam pear grows straight up like a poplar; so does a Rag apple, and so very largely does Northern Spy when young; but it spreads when older.

Fifth. Head your trees low down. I do not mean so low that you cannot drive under. There will be trouble with spreading trees like Spitzenbergs and Greenings and Kings and Jonathans if you head too low. As a rule, about five feet is low enough for the first forks; but you cannot do all this heading at first. The first few years you must let lower limbs remain so as not to make the trees switch like, and check its development. Never spoil the stocky appearance of a tree and make it look like a whip handle.

Sixth. When you trim, carry a sharp pruning knife and a flexible strong piece of wire. Do not feel sure that there are not grubs under or in the bark. Where it looks black cut, and if the under bark is black also, cut freely until the dead part is removed, and you will then also make sure that grubs are not concealed and doing mischief. About the lower trunk examine for borers; and use your flexible wire to kill them. Cut freely; it is far less damage to cut a tree than to leave it to the mercy of destroyers. I go over the whole trunk of all trees—fruit or shade trees—annually. If infected I go oftener. After a thorough work with knife, I use a wash of strong kerosene emulsion. This I apply in some cases once a month. Use a pint to a pailful of water. Keep a gallon of emulsion always on hand. It is the best of all applications to make sickly trees revive. It is probable, if your shade trees have been dying, that there are borers somewhere. If not, some form of anthrax or fungoid disease is at work. Use, in either case, the kerosene emulsion. If you are sure of anthrax, or find no borers, wash the trees thoroughly with copperas water, ten pounds to fifty gallons of water. This should be done when the foliage is off. A good supply dropping about the roots will do no harm.

Seventh. Keep all sorts of trees well cleaned of grass and weeds about the trunk, and well supplied with coal ash or other mulch. It is well to have a compost heap always forming to use for mulch. This is one of the most important points about a horticultural home. I have these compost heaps in different places. Into them are flung all weeds, all leaves, all sorts of manure and rotting fruit. Old heaps of refuse are begged or bouhgt, and dozens of wagon loads of autumn leaves are gathered for these composts. All ashes and coal ashes and brine are added. These composts are used not only for mulch, but to cover strawberries. You cannot too strongly emphasize the value of this sort of property. It is a sin to burn leaves.

Eighth. Now about different varieties of trees, which seems to be the puzzle with many who desire good orchards and fine places. Do not undertake to trim all trees into the same shape, but apply the foregoing rules to all sorts. Special difficulties occur with special varieties. For instance, a Northern Spy will generally spread out into limbs from a single spot, bringing the strain all upon that spot. We must prevent this by cutting. Use your brains in deciding how to compel the branching to occur at more intervals. Very erect-growing trees must be thinned a little in the top, but the top never cut off. On lawns where there is not much room for a tree to spread graft in fruits that will grow up like the Spy or the Buffam pear or the Sheldon; or plant such as the Prunus Simoni.

Ninth. As a rule it does not pay to undertake to renovate trees that have gone far into decay. A good orchardist is always planting trees, and always cutting more or less of decrepit ones. I find that the trimmings with old trees cut away, each year, keep me in firewood for six months on a place of nine acres. It is not possible to avoid more or less of this passing away of trees. But if we are learning with the years, we shall be glad to have vacancies to fill. Do not set new apple trees in the places occupied by old ones; they will surely die. It is better to plant pear or plum or cherry orchards where the apples stood. So my advice is, do not waste much time or labor on decrepit trees. Pear trees that are stunted but not really rotten can be often waked to new life by digging about and fertilizing them, and by scraping the bark and washing with kerosene emulsion. I have seen pear trees that have stood nearly barren for many years waked to growth and heavy cropping.

Rules will not settle all these cases. The owner of trees must be a student of trees and learn by investigation and experiment. It is to be hoped that our common school curriculum will, ere long, include a knowledge of applied botany, entomology and science of horticulture.

FARM WORK TO BE DONE NOW.

Work is now crowding on every hand. The days are short and in order to get much accomplished it is necessary to be ready for work at daylight every morning. The progressive, pushing farmer tries to get his work all done before cold weather sets in. The vegetables must all be harvested and stored before there is any danger of their freezing. The corn should be husked and the fodder in the barn or carefully stacked. If left in the field many of the shocks will fall down, to the serious detriment of both corn and fodder. Mice and sometimes rats will destroy much of it. In order to make the most out of the fodder it should be cut or shredded before feeding. It is more convenient to handle, goes farther and makes better manure. The cutting can be done with a hand machine if the amount is small, otherwise horse or staam power had better be used.

The industrious farmer will never be idle on account of bad weather, but will plan his work accordingly. He ought to have a room where he can work with comfort in bad weather, and have a small stock of tools with which to do ordinary repairing. During winter, the farm machinery should be repaired and repainted when necessary. It is surprising what an amount of repairing a man who is handy with tools can do, and what a saving it effects in a year. A small stock of tools, including those necessary for blacksmithing, can be bought for $15 to $20 and their use will save their cost every year. If wagons and other implements are kept in good repair always and are well painted, they will last one-half longer. All this can be done at home at a very small expense.

Winter is also a good time to prepare material for fencing and building purposes. Also to lay in a good supply of fuel, for the majority of farmers still use wood, ready for the stove. When prepared about a year ahead, and thoroughly dry, about one-third less is required than if used green. There are always mild days when this work can be done. Later in the winter manure can be drawn to the field and spread ready for plowing under as soon as the ground is in proper condition in spring.

WHAT TO FEED FOWLS IN WINTER.

We all like a warm breakfast on a cold morning and farm fowls appreciate one too. Place clover rowen, cut to one-quarter-inch length, in a pail and pour on sufficient boiling water to scald it. Let stand for a few minutes, then add equal parts of corn and oats, ground together, and wheat bran to which is added one-sixth part animal meal. Mix and feed at once. Give plenty of pure water to drink. Be sure not to forget the water.

At noon, scatter a few spoonfuls of wheat in the litter, to afford the hens a little exercise. Gather what eggs there are, to keep them from freezing. Toward night give a feed composed of four parts oats and one part each of wheat and corn. Scatter in the litter. Gather up the remainder of eggs and see that there is plenty of clean water. When the fowls have gone to roost for the night, empty out water dishes and lock up the house. The amount of corn may be increased or diminished according to condition of fowl. Small and active breeds can eat more corn to advantage than the larger fowls. Boiled potatoes or other vegetables may be given frequently to good advantage. Cabbage, beets and turnips may be fed without cooking, and will help to increase the supply of eggs. Ground oyster shells should be kept where the fowls can have access to them at all times. It is well also to have a box of gravel or crushed rock within reach.

There are other methods of feeding that give good results, but, cost considered, it is not easy to find a better one. With the exception that the clover rowen may be omitted during that part of the season when the poultry have a grass run, practically the same method of feeding may be practiced throughout the year.

WOMAN'S WEARY LOT.

How the Weaker Sex are Treated on the Alaskan Coast.

Women of aboriginal peoples all over the world have frightfully hard times, but in few places worse than among the natives of the Klondike region.

There it is the fashion when a child is born to drive the mother literally out of the house as soon as parturition is accomplished. She is shunned by everybody as unclean and left to her fate, while the father is put to bed and as carefully nursed as if he were passing through a critical illness.

This is among the Indians of the interior, the people who have only within the last few years permitted the whites to enter their territory to look for gold. The Esquimaux of the Alaskan coast, who belong to an entirely different race have no such brutal custom. They are kindly folk, treating their women pretty well, but the latter find life difficult enough, owing to the frigid climate. The only washing the Esquimau baby gets is bestowed by its mother's tongue.

When the Esquimau husband comes home from a hunting trip he is usually completely exhausted. Very likely he has been dragging a seal or other large animal for many miles over the ice. His wife's first task is to scrape the snow off him with an ivory knife that is somewhat like a paper-cutter. Her next business is to cut strips of seal blubber a foot long and an inch or so thick, which she puts into his mouth, chopping them off with a knife when he chokes. In this way he is made to swallow six or eight pounds of blubber, which is full of oil and excellent fuel to promote the body heat, until finally he is thoroughly gorged and sound asleep.

At the time of the great international Alaskan fair, which is held every summer on Kotezebue Sound, the Siberian Chukchees come over to swap reindeer skins for seal oil. Then there is much trading for wives. A pretty fair wife can be bought for $10 barter. Among the Esquimax wives are usually purchased, and sometimes the women are consulted in the making of bargains. The men frequently exchange wives for a stated period. Occasionally they rent them out. Among the most highly prized objects of bijouterie are glass cruet stoppers and stoppers of Worcestershire sauce bottles which are used for Esquimau belles for labrets, inserted in a hole in the lower lip.

The Esquimaux of Labrador have a peculiar way of treating old women. The latter, if too feeble, to be longer useful, are purposely neglected until they are so weak from hunger as to be unable to walk. Then the tribe—by habit more or less nomadic—is seized with a sudden desire to move on, and the luckless woman is deserted. Very likely, after they have gone some distance three or four of the men will retrace their steps on pretense of looking for a lost ammunition bag or some other article, and, if their track be followed the corpse of the old woman will be found bound with thongs according to the customary method of disposing of the dead, and covered with a pile of stones. Women who are deemed unlucky or who happen to be disliked are driven from the camp—a fate assuring death from cold and hunger. It is a common thing among these Labrador Esquimaux for the men to put up their wives as stakes in gambling games.

Jump if you please, from the northern to the southern end of the American continent, and you will find the women having equally hard times in other ways. Among the natives of Terra del Fuego, who occupy a region where the cold is as severe as in the country of the Esquimaux and food is much more scarce, the gentler sex is expected to contribute to the food supply in seasons of famine. When reduced to starvation point these savaegs kill the old women and eat them.

SYMPATHY.

Sympathy is a form of Christian service. It is not a favor granted by one and received by another; it is that action by which one life enters into another's life, takes up a portion of the burden, shares the joy of success, becomes for the time being a part of that life, and contributes to it some of its own strength. It does not weaken the individuality of the life it helps, it rather strengthens it. It does not lessen its responsibilities, it helps to bear them; by relieving the tension it gives opportunity for development, by companionship gives new courage and fresh ability for advance when the assisting presence is withdrawn.

THOSE NEIGHBOR CHILDREN.

Fond Mother—I have called Johnny a dozen times to come in and go on an errand, but he won't come. He is out there playing with one of the neighbor's children.

Caller, meaningly—He—won't come?

Frond Mother—No. Those neighbor children ought to have more respect for my feelings than to go on playing with him after he has been called, and I shall send them home this instant.