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Poetry.

THE HOMING

When my wayward boy came back
From his reckless roaming,
With his plumage ruth and wrack,
Like a spent bird homing.

First I looked, and then I smiled,
Then we clung together;
He was still my child, my child,
Love was still a tether.

Never a word, reproach I said,
Asked not what had kept him;
Only when he lay in bed
Then (in mine) I wept him.

Wept the wounds upon him wrought
This or long years bequeathing,
Thrice that night his threshold sought,
Watchful of his breathing.

Listening, 'twixt times afraid
Lest he be some other—
Thanking God, whose mercy made
Me to be his mother.

Select Family Reading

HOOPS OF STEEL

By Ernest H. Stovell

IN THE house of learning from which Joe Dimmick received his learning was vast and big. Left fatherless and motherless when but six years of age, he had attended both day and night sessions of the school of experience. He knew more about foot and hanging walls, diorite and porphyry, than a professor of mineralogy. He could tell by the roar whether the whole stamp battery was in action, or only a part. He knew by the hum of the steel drums in the hoist room whether the cages were coming up or going down, and whether they carried ore or men. He could read every clanging signal of the big gong over the engineer's head and knew how to give them.

In due time Joe forced himself up the line of promotion from mucker to drill carrier, from drill carrier to cage tender, and from cage tender to pump man's assistant. And that was how he came to get closely acquainted with Dudley Mason, and to be "Dud's" best friend, for the latter was pump man of the night shift; anyhow, that was his present position. There was a time when he held a responsible place in the superintendent's office, and another in the amalgamating room, but he had lost both of them as he had lost others, because he would not keep away from the "Dewdrop." Even the tears and pleadings of his sister Margaret, had no effect upon him.

And now Joe, the once kicked-about boy of the mines, was sticking to Dudley like Gumbo to a barrel head, even though the down going youth was often vicious and mean. Not infrequently Dudley made the heat of the pump station, far down in the bowels of the Gold Bug, all the more unbearable with his oaths and curses, and uncontrollable temper.

One night, when the pump was hammering like a battering ram, and threatening to blow out a cylinder-head, Joe took a wrench and attempted to loosen the tension on the suction. Dudley was out at the time, but came in roaring mad and dazed with liquor.

"What are you doing?" the older youth cried, as he grabbed Joe by the scuff of the neck, and hauled him away. "You'll have the pump buckling all over the lower level of the mine if you aren't careful."

Joe was almost as large, and fully as strong as Dudley, and while amply able to take care of himself, did nothing more in the present instance than to struggle loose from Dudley's grasp. This increased the latter's anger, and in a fit of rage he took Joe unawares and tossed him over the curb into the black waters of the sump near which they wrestled. The underground reservoir was more than twenty feet deep, and only his being a good swimmer saved Joe from drowning. He clambered out, shivering, but his round face did not lose its smile.

Joe's extreme cheerfulness under such provocation touched Dudley's hardened heart. He dropped himself on an oil barrel and watched the young fellow wring the water from his clothes. "Why don't you lick me, Joe?" he demanded. "It's a shame for me to use you the way I do. If you would give me a sound threshing I actually believe it would do me good."

Joe burst into a hearty laugh at this suggestion. "I'm not sure that it would help matters any, and that's why I don't try it," he told him. And then more seriously, he added: "You never have these fits, Dud, when you are sober."

"That's right, old man," Dudley replied. "I am on the down road that is plain to be seen. Anyway this fact should be enough to keep you away from me. Why do you stick to me, Joe? I'm not worth it."

For some reason—in fact, many reasons—Joe could not make immediate reply and after a time Dudley continued: "But for you and my sister Margaret, I wouldn't have a friend in this world. Neither of you should waste your time on me. I am on the down grade."

"Don't say that, Dud," Joe cut in quickly. He came across the pump station and laid a hand on Dudley's shoulder. "If I had a sister like her, Dud, I'd do anything—I would wade through fire for her."

Then Joe took a long-spouted oil can from a shelf and disappeared into the steaming darkness of the pump pit, while Dudley remained in sober silence on the barrel. Often before had he settled himself in this corner and lost the liquor daze in sleep; but this time he remained wide-awake and open-eyed, his brain awhirl and his mind alert. Not till the shift was half over did he get up and join his assistant in the work of the station. The two finished in time to join the last load of men that were hauled up into the sweet, pure air of the outer world.

Joe did not join the line of men that filed down the trail to the mess house, but followed Dudley to the latter's cabin, where Margaret had a steaming hot breakfast waiting them. Dudley had sent her word from the shaft house, more than an hour before, that he would bring his companion and the sister gladly welcomed him. During the repast of hot biscuits, coffee and syrup, Joe took note of the two interlinked steel hoops or rings hanging on the wall near the table. They had evidently been wrought by a mine smith, and the welding was so excellently done that Joe's mechanical eye was much attracted by it.

Noting his interest in the hoops of steel, Margaret took them down and handed them to him for a closer inspection. "They were made by a close friend of my father's, when the two worked together over in the Silver Hall. Father saved his life once, and the two were very devoted to each other."

Margaret said but little more about it, but Joe quickly caught the eloquent suggestion of friendship in the two interlinked hoops of steel. He believed that was a friendship worth while, and he told her so. "It's the most enduring thing in the world," the girl agreed, her black eyes glowing; "and the most valuable. Other things may wear out or disappear, but such a friendship as those steel hoops represent lasts for all time."

Dudley's sister, though naturally a charming girl, was in her best mood this morning, and the hour spent in the cabin passed quickly and happily for Joe. It seemed to him, too, that Dudley was more cheerful and more hopeful. When the boy of the mines left for his bunk and the day's rest, he was filled with the hope that the new shift would find Dudley sober and wide-awake and ready for duty.

At shift-changing time that evening Joe was at the shaft-house. He pulled a candlestick from the head-frame post, and waited at the collar of the shaft for Dudley. He waited till all the night men had gone down for work in the stopes and drifts. Several times the cage shot up with both decks loaded. A mucker rolled off the loaded cars, and rolled on empty ones. Each time the cage hesitated a moment, waiting for the head pump man, but as he still failed to appear, it dropped down the shaft.

Finally Hudson, the superintendent, came up and finding Joe sitting alone by the gate, asked: "Where's Dud?"

"I think he will be here in a little while," Joe answered. He purposely evaded a direct reply, fearful of results.

Hudson pulled his watch. "He's eight minutes late now, and the pump station is unmanned. If he isn't on duty in five minutes I'll have him fired. Do you know where he is?"

Joe was obliged to answer: "I believe I do."

"Then hike down and yank him out. Bring him up, if he isn't too drunk. Take a wrench to him if you need to. The pump station must be manned at once."

Joe jumped up and darted down the trail toward the main camp. He hesitated a moment when near the "Dewdrop" door, considering what best to do. He knew that Dudley would be in an ugly mood—would possibly refuse to return with him, or even take notice of him.

As the young man expected, he found Dudley lined up with a crowd before the saloon bar. Glasses were being emptied as fast as the keeper could fill them. Joe walked up boldly and touched Dudley on the arm. "It is past time to go down. The station is unmanned. Hudson sent me after you."

"Get out of this, you brown topped chipmunk," the pump man yelled, as he turned angrily upon the youth. "Go bark at the gray squirrels! I ain't got time to crack nuts with you!" A boisterous laugh followed, but it was unheeded and unheard by Joe.

"Hudson wants you Dud," Joe repeated, taking a firmer grip on Dudley's arm. "We're late. The shift went on over ten minutes ago. There is no one at the pump and she will hammer herself to death."

"Let her die!" Dudley roared. "The Gold Bug needs a new pump anyhow. Get away from me, now, before I blow you away." He thrust out his long arm and threw Joe across the room, and while the latter gathered himself together, the saloon door opened quickly and a mucker rushed in, half gone of breath, yelling: "Where's Dudley and Joe?"

"Right here," Joe answered promptly. "What's the trouble?"

"Fire's broke out in the pump station. She's burning like a furnace and smoking like a tar barrel. All the men are coming out of the upper level. Hudson wants you two to go down with him. If it ain't put out at once the whole mine will burn."

"Come quick, Dud!" Joe cried, tugging at the pump man's sleeve.

Impending disaster sobered Dudley. The dazed whiskey left him. "What's that?" he cried, trying to grasp the full import of the alarm. "Fire in the pump station? The men all out?"

He left an unemptied glass on the bar and dashed out the door, following Joe. But the news had already carried and the people were flocking to the scene of excitement. Pushing their way through they found Hudson charging madly back and forth trying to get two men to go down with them. Smoke was pouring from the mine in great black rolls, sucked up by the long draft from below.

"Come on, any two of you!" Hudson yelled. "I want two men at once."

The miners held back. It was courting death, they believed, to attempt a quenching of the fire; anyway, all the men were out. "What's the use?" they murmured. "An avalanche could not put out that fire now."

"It must be put out!" the superintendent yelled. He seized the hose coil from the rack and threw it on the cage floor. Then he pulled the bell wire. He was going down alone! The Gold Bug was above everything to Hudson, even above his own life.

"Hold on!" Joe yelled, as he came up the trail and realized the situation. The cage hesitated and the young man leaped on, followed by Dudley. Then they went down the shaft, cutting a hole through the dense smoke. On the 800-foot level they stopped with a jerk. Here was the pump station, and the fire, now well under way, was roaring like a smelter furnace. The heat was like vitriol. All three fell flat and pressed their faces close against the damp floor, gasping for breath.

Hudson pulled the hose from the cage and dragged the end to the hydrant. Connections were made, and the stream hissed from the nozzle upon the flames. The fire ate greedily of the oil-soaked floor. The three took turns holding the nozzle, but despite their heroic work the fire grew.

Dudley was completely sobered now. When his turn came for the hose he would remain overtime. Once his slouched hat, pulled over his face caught fire. He slapped it out and put it on again. A second time it blazed, and he threw it to the flames, letting his hair singe.

Still the fire grew. It crossed the floor of the station, and a hundred tongues of flame twisted frantically round the big pump. But the big machine, unmindful of impending disaster, continued its "Chug! chug! chug!"

"There's just one way to put 'er out," Dudley declared. "And that is to release the water of the sump tank. I will crawl through—"

"No you won't!" Hudson declared. "It would be wading through fire up to your eyes."

The Superintendent's protestations were not heard by the pump man. Hudson was at the nozzle, and when Joe saw what Dudley intended doing, he pulled him back, speaking in his ear. "Don't do that, Dud. You stay in here and let me go."

Dudley did not heed and Joe continued: "You've got Margaret up in camp and I haven't anyone to care; let me go—"

Then the pump man turned, and Joe saw an expression of fierce determination blazing in his eyes. There was something in his voice that Joe had never heard before.

"Do you think that my sister would want me stand back now?" he asked. "No! I've done some mean things, but I'm not quite such a coward as you take me for. This is my place."

He dropped flat and crept into the station door, now a veritable furnace of fire. The walls were of sheet steel; and between these and the rock face of the cavern was a narrow space. Though the steel wall was red with heat, Dudley crawled into the crevice and started across. He turned once to look back, feeling something touch his heels. It was Joe following him.

"Go back," he cried, but Joe paid no heed.

They reached the opposite side with their faces blistered. Climbing aloft hastily to the upper tank, they leaped into the cool water. Then Dudley pulled the plug. With wild hisses the water poured down the sides and through the ceiling of the burning station. The steel walls sputtered like a monster frying-pan. Gradually the fire left the timbers, and sparks ceased to fall from the roof. Before the upper tank was empty the fire was extinguished.

When the pent-up energy of the disaster was exhausted, Dudley's eye lost its clearness, and his brain grew giddy. He reeled across the charred floor, and would have fallen into the lower sump, from around which the railing was now burned, had Joe not caught and swung him to safety. At the same moment a charred and burned-out timber dropped from the station roof and struck Joe on the head and shoulder, knocking him down and pinning him to the floor.

Once again Dudley's eye and brain were clear, and his strength returned. He stooped and gathered up the youth.

Hudson came into the wrecked station and found Dudley bathing Joe's face and head in the cool water of the sump.

"I'm afraid that he's badly hurt. He saved me from falling into the sump, and caught a timber big enough to have felled an ox."

"Better get 'im up and out of here," directed the superintendent. Whereupon they took Joe between them and went across the smoking wreckage. With their clothes blackened and burned, they looked strangely inhuman as they pulled the cage and pulled the bell wire. In the burned station the monster pump hammered away unceasingly, "Chug! chug! chug!" sweet music to Hudson's ears.

Soon they were put up on the surface, and out into the cool night air that soothed their parched lungs like nectar. Willing hands helped Joe to the bunkhouse, and the camp doctor was soon attending to his wounds. Dudley came down from his cabin and entered the bunkhouse just as Joe opened his eyes. He offered a blistered hand to the youth and Joe took it eagerly.

"I want you to forgive me, Joe," he cried, "for my unkind treatment and more than unkind words; I'm sorry that I've said some things—"

"You didn't know what you were saying Dud," Joe replied through his bandages, with a genuine feeling of pity.

"Yes, I know, I know," Dudley replied, "but after this I'm going to have my right mind—all the time."

Just then the crowd parted at the door, and a girl stepped softly into the bunkhouse. It was Margaret. She came directly to Joe's cot, and stooping over him for a moment, placed two interlinked hoops of steel in his blistered hand. "Friendship that stands the test are like hoops of steel," she said.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Notes from the Free Press of Thursday, December 7th, 1893

Wm. Forbes has been laid up for days from a kick on his leg by a horse.

Rev. J. W. Rae preached on prohibition last Sunday morning in Knox Church, and Rev. Jos. Edge will do so next Sunday evening in the Methodist Church.

A heavy snow storm on Sunday last.

A good deal of la grippe is in vogue at present.

The new Crewsons Corners Post Office will take a few patrons from Rockwood P. O. It is about thirty years since the post office there was closed. The re-opening on December 1st was hailed with much satisfaction. Mr. W. Anderson, blacksmith, is postmaster.

Crewson's Corners has had its ups and downs. Mr. Wm. Homestead once had a tannery here. Jago's glove factory, of Rockwood, originated here. For many years G.T.R. trains stopped here for water. Morgan Crewson, Sr., ran a shingle factory, but one day a steam plug blew out and it cost him an eye.

In view of our coming Provincial Plebiscite on Prohibition a large and enthusiastic meeting was held in the town hall on last Wednesday evening. Mr. John Warren was Chairman and spirited addresses were delivered by Rev. J. W. Rae, Presbyterian; Joseph Edge, Methodist; G. B. Cooke, Episcopalian, and S.B. Stephens, Disciples. A letter from Rev. P. Haley, of the Roman Catholic Church, was read in which regret at forced absence was expressed. A choir embracing representatives from above churches rendered very appropriate selections which were much appreciated.

Robt. Ebbage advertises cutting cordwood left at the planing mill—1 cut, 50 cents, 2 cuts, 80 cents, delivered after cut.

Engineer Chapman has recommended a $50,000 to $60,000 system of waterwork, the source of supply to be a well.

THE SCHOOL REPORTS

MR. T. T. MOORE'S ROOM—William Edmiston, Etta Laird, Chas. McCann, Fenwell Smythe, Fred Storey, Wm. Stewart, Hattie Quan, William Arnold, Jos. Moore.

MISS CLARKE MCPHAIL'S ROOM—Clara Cobban, Daisy Nicklin, Mabel Rae, Tommy Henderson, Mary Harvey, Eva Perryman, Bennett Clark, Lottie Ebbage, Jane Gurney, Edith Nicklin, Jane Cook, Roderick McDonald, Minnie Arthurs.

MISS B. PETRIE'S ROOM—John Ruddick, Fred Wilde, Jos. Bingham, Orville Millar, Arthur McDonald, George Cooke, Mabel Soper, Mabel Creesmore, Etta McDonald, Ralfa Loveys.

MISS M. E. NELSON'S ROOM—Josie Stephenson, Moses Ballantyne, George Hynds, Ida Laird, Ella Gamble, Mabel Edmiston, Maggie Wilde, Edmnd Pelost, Ethel Millie, Howland Brown, Malcolm McEachern, Edgar Watson.

LOWER SCHOOL—Alice Brown, Charlie Quantic, Mina Gamble, Iva Chave, Lexi Gamble, Frances Townsend, James McDonald, Annie Quantic, Ada Alexander, Clinton Swackhamer, Nellie Brown, Ada Townsend.—Miss J. McDonald, teacher.

BORN

BAZET.—On November 25th, to Mr. and Mrs. Ira Bazet, a son.

GILLIES.—In Esquesing, on December 2nd, to Mr. and Mrs. John Gillies, a daughter.

AGNEW.—At Knatchbull, on December 5th, to Mr. and Mrs. David Agnew, a son.

MARRIED

BLACK-MITCHELL.—In Hamilton, on Wednesday, Nov. 26th, by Elder George Munroe, John Black, of Kramosa, to Mrs. May Mitchell, of Milton.

SHE HAD IT ALL FIXED

The conversation in a Washington club recently turned to floriculture, when Thomas Nelson Page, of Virginia, the newly-appointed Ambassador to Italy, recalled a happy little incident along that line.

Some time ago, according to Mr. Page, Smith moved from his city home, where there wasn't room in the back yard to grow a small blade of grass, to quite an extensive place in the country.

Instantly, the inexperienced little wife got busy with the garden rake, and the next day she handed her husband a list of the flower seeds that she wished him to get.

"What kind of a list have you got here?" asked the old man, closely studying the paper. "You want flowers that will bloom this summer, don't you?"

"What a foolish question to ask!" was the smiling reply of wifey. "Of course I do!"

"This doesn't look like it," declared hubby, still examining the paper. "Not one of the plants that you have down here blooms until the second summer."

"Oh, I have got that fixed all right, Harry," confidently replied wifey. "I have made up the list from last year's catalogue."

HE WAS DOING THAT

The football match was over, and a huge crowd surrounded the small gates, the only exit, when a little boy was seen climbing the wall in an endeavor to get out without being crushed.

When almost at the top a policeman saw him and shouted out to him:

"Eh, lad, come down and go out the same way you came in."

The reply came back as the lad dropped over the other side:

"I am doing that, mister."

The truest wisdom, in general, is a resolute determination.—Napoleon.

The small courtesies sweeten life; the greater ennoble it.—Bovee.

GROWING OLD

A little more grey in the lessening hair
Each day as the years go by;
A little more stooping of the form,
A little more dim the eye.
A little more faltering of the step,
As we tread life's pathway o'er,
But a little nearer every day
To the ones who have gone before.

A little more halting of the gait,
And a dullness of the ear;
A growing weariness of the frame,
With each swift passing year.
A fading of hopes and ambitions, too,
A faltering in life's quest;
But a little nearer every day
To a sweet and peaceful rest.

A little more loneliness to bide
As the dear ones pass away;
A bigger claim on the heavenly land
With every passing day.
A little further from toil and care,
A little less way to roam;
A drawing nearer to a peaceful voyage
And a happy welcome home.

GOLDEN WEATHER

Of the whole year, I think I love
The best that time we're red to call
The little summer of all autumn,
About the middle of the fall.

Because there fell the golden days
Of that gold year beside the sea
When first I had you at heart's will
And you had your whole will of me.

It is the being's afternoon,
The second summer of the soul,
When spirits find a way to reach
Beyond the sense and its control.

Then come the firmamental days,
The undersession of the year,
When God himself, being well content,
Takes time to whisper in our ear.

Sweetheart, once more by every sign
Of blade and shadow it must be
The little summer of all saints
In the red autumn by the sea.
—Bliss Carman

WHAT JOKE COST

A schoolboy, of Harrow, was walking one day in the fields when he observed a portly farmer on horseback, who was in a little difficulty because he could not easily open a gate. The boy ran to the man's assistance.

"Thank you!" said the farmer. "Would you mind telling me your name?"

The boy thought he saw an opportunity for a joke.

"Green," he replied, giving the first common name which came into his head.

"What is your father?"

"A cheesemonger in London. He has a small shop in Theobald's road." This was a wholly fictitious reply.

"You are a good sort of chap," said the farmer, "and I shall not forget you."

He left the lad chuckling over the "sell." But his love of romancing had cost him a fortune! Years afterwards advertisements appeared in the newspapers for a young man named "Green," whose father had at some time kept a cheesemonger's shop in Theobald's road, and to whom a big legacy was devised in recognition of a service rendered at Harrow.

As this published clue to identity was entirely false, the money, of course, could never be claimed.

SPARKLES

Street Bandit to Professor—If you move you are a dead man!

You're wrong, my man. If I move it will show that I am alive. You should be more careful in the use of your words."

"This man has made a speech contradicting what he said some time ago," said the paste-and-scissors editor.

"All right," said the headline artist, "We'll print it under the caption, 'Atmospheric Change.'"—Washington Star.

A lad with a rather large mouth entered one of London's first class stores to purchase a mouth-organ. The shopman quoted the price of the various ones that he had in stock, and also allowed the youngster to try a few, but in the end he found that he could not satisfy him, so turning around to him he said "We shall have to measure you for one, sonny, so just try your mouth along that piano."

There never was and never will be a universal panacea in one remedy for all ills to which flesh is heir. What would relieve one ill in turn would aggravate the others. We have, however, in Quinine Wine, when obtained in a sound, unadulterated state a remedy for many and grievous ills. By its gradual and judicious use the frailest systems are led into convalescence and strength by the influence which Quinine exerts on Nature's own restoratives. It relieves those to whom a chronic state of morbid despondency and lack of interest in life is a disease, and by tranquillizing the nerves disposes to sound and refreshing sleep—imparts vigor to the action of the blood, which being stimulated, courses through the veins, strengthening the healthy, and the functions of the system, thereby making activity a necessary result strengthening the frame and giving life to the digestive organs which naturally demand increased substance—result, improved appetite. Northrop & Lyman, of Toronto, have given to the public their superior Quinine. By the opinion of scientists, the wine approaches nearest perfection of any on the market. All druggists sell it.