

The Action Free Press

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THE LITTLE CHURCH BACK HOME

When the big pipe organ's swelling and the city church and the Tabernacle of the living angels' wings. And the congregation's music in the heart of length! Below, waiting for the preacher to begin. In that little home happens that I could forget the place. And again the mask and bowly 'fore the world that you had me. That there that wasn't healthy mouth a sprig or a dome, but the slender sought their flowers in that little church back home.

When wild profusion meetings had, have done you good to hear? The congregation singing with a blend like "Rock of Ages" towered like a shoulder's sort of wall. In that little home happens that I could forget the place. And again the mask and bowly 'fore the world that you had me. That there that wasn't healthy mouth a sprig or a dome, but the slender sought their flowers in that little church back home.

"The city church's voice was in evidence no more, as though the river where the sunlight shone still must. And the preacher's voice pleading to treat all men as brother in this weary vale of woe. This old Indian rock and the congregation's large, the preacher's doing made with his hands, the children's anxious roar to heaven through the dome, but my heart is sighing for the little church back home."

LIVING UP TO INDIAN ROCK

By Harriet Lumine Smith

In Joseph Hannister's youth it had been said of him that he was "mighty in his ways," and the statement, though quite an insult to criticism, a young Indian and right the young never vanity. As he grew older he did his best to live up to his neighbors' idea of him, and with excellent success. When he was in middle age when some one coined a phrase which destined to stick, "He's as set as Indian Rock," declared a disgusted acquaintance who had vainly tried to teach him better ways, and from that time on, Joseph Hannister's characteristic trait was never mentioned without coupling it with the rock which was one of the landmarks of the town.

Indian Rock was a huge, egg-shaped stone balanced on the mountain side in a fashion suggesting that at any moment it might roll down and smash through the trees down into the rocky channel of Black River. But its air of instability was misleading. Generations of Indians of whom he had said that he had shamed at first timorously, and then desperately. And through the years it had come to be the symbol for the immovable. It had won the respect of the Indians, Indians as far as the least bright die-lodge it from its place, and yet defying gravitation. Tradition connected it with the sacred rites of the Indians, and it had been told to the children of the tribe that these old stories were validly being forgotten. To the new generation Indian Rock typified Joseph Hannister, and Joseph Hannister was the personification of the rock.

Milly Laughlin had never attracted her grandfather's attention particularly until her father's death. Joseph Hannister was of opinion that she had not been interested in the least by the achievements of the modern woman. He was disappointed that they daughter had been given him, a grandson, but he was not surprised. Grand had always disappointed him, in spite of his timely effort to cover up the secret. Every time he heard the story of what Milly was the oldest, he paid much less attention than to the calves on his farm, for Joseph Hannister was a man of the soil.

The sudden death of his son-in-law awakened Joseph Hannister to a sense of responsibility in regard to his daughter's family. He found several who'd been looking for a child to adopt. If they'll take Violet, that's dispose of her. And you get a service, and you have your living, even if they don't pay much money."

He paused, but not to hear what she had to say, only to think himself if he had covered over the secret. But Milly took him aside and said, "I'm very kind of you, Grandfather," she said, "to take so much pains planning everything. But you see we don't have any money in savings. What then? No money in renting it, even if you found a good tenant, and that's not so easy nowadays."

"We mean to run the farm," announced Milly. "It's a good investment." "What? What? This gives us away!"

"And even if, we didn't keep the farm," continued Milly speaking with maddening quietness, "it's better to make arrangements for keeping it for the family. There's nothing that would induce us to give Violet to anybody."

"Tut! Tut! Young women, do you know about your own business?"

"This time I don't seem unwise, Grandfather, but mother and I have talked things over and made up our minds. This winter I'm going to the State College of Agriculture and learn all I can."

"Spending money for schooling!"

"Her grandfather interrupted her with a loud angry laugh. "Well," he laughed, and almost as the words passed his lips, he looked up and was羞红了脸. "He looked up at the light of the setting sun, and sighed. He could not give in. "People would think I was in my dotage," he told himself. "Everybody knows I'm too old to be moved, and I can't hold on to the rock."

Joseph Hannister's uneasy thoughts could not have been conducive to sleep under any circumstances, but

dollar from me, not a dollar. Dye understood his grandfather, but—"

"Saying more, I didn't favor your mother marrying George Laughlin, and now how it's turned out. He's got the farm, he's got his wife, and three pretty girls. He would have said, 'Three imbeciles!' in much the same tone. Now I've given your mother one more chance, and if she does not succeed, then I will consider offering her for adoption."

"I can't buy a single child of children around here," he said irritably. "Daddy, Father will take her, they can have her."

"Mother will never agree to that," "Saying nothing, he thought I'm dumb to hear you, and I think I'll change my mind. I guess you've heard the way I was 'hard,' (p. move) and India Rock, too?"

"India Rock, the old glory place the 'Rock' was built for all."

"Every face was wreathed with sweet-sorrows, and we all knew for a fact that, when it came to the paws above the able, for a diamond often gathered from the earth."

"And we didn't mind the settin' in the Little church back home."

"The city church's voice was in evidence no more, as though the river where the sunlight shone still must. And the preacher's voice pleading to treat all men as brother in this weary vale of woe. This old Indian rock and the congregation's large, the preacher's doing made with his hands, the children's anxious roar to heaven through the dome, but my heart is sighing for the little church back home."

other influences were in combination to bring his night's rest. Early in the evening the clouds began to gather, but it was not until about that the storm broke in the north, and from the northward came a wind, such as was seldom seen than the last. It was late in the evening for electric alarms, but the thunder peals had howled so furiously that the old Tabernacle, centuries old, fell crashing to earth. Joseph Hannister walked the floor, unable to sleep, thinking of his friend's safety in his grounds and the town of Millie.

Edward surmised the storm subsided. The day dawned fair. The old man dressed himself and went down. As he glanced toward the mountains he stopped, staggered and drew his hand across his eyes, as if he was in the dark. "There's a gash in the mountain," he said, "and a long, straight scar, a tree. Indian Rock was gone!"

It was about six o'clock and Milly was getting breakfast ready. She was getting breakfast ready, when she turned toward her husband and stood surprised as her grandfather came in sight.

"Will you give me a cup of coffee, Milly?" he asked. "I'm not so well as you, but I think you also could not have been ill for so long."

"Come in, Grandfather. I'll be ready in a minute." She was dressed in a simple dress of the Laughlin family. And she was the rocks that followed, eddying bits of news reached the old man's ears. Milly had gone to the Agricultural College for three months of study, and when he heard of this he was shocked.

"Why, Grandmother?" Milly gasped.

"You mean—are you ready to be friends?" Her voice was having her eyes dimmed by her tears. "I'm not engaged to any girl, but I am engaged, after what you said."

"Joseph Hannister put his hand on her arm. "I find you looked out toward the mountain this morning, when making such a fool of yourself can call me grandfather. I've done with the lot of them and I guess everybody who knows me, knows that when you're not set, you can't be."

"Well, look," he drawled to the window. "There's a hole in the clouds, and rolled down the mountain. Milly. They always said that I was set as an Indian Rock, but I haven't any cast to be more set than that. The rock's moved, Milly, and so have I."

Joseph Hannister's morning.

"No," his granddaughter replied, and her face showed little alarm.

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