

A ROMANCE OF WEST POINT.

It was ever so many years ago, but the Hudson, near West Point, where the river broadens and narrows and winds so that a stranger would fancy that he was coming to the end of it, looked exactly as it does now.

Only the stars were in the sky when Edna March sauntered slowly down to the gate of her mother's home and folded her arms upon its bars. She was out there in the moonlight listening for a sound, which she presently heard, a clear, sweet whistle with a bird note in it, the sweetest whistle that ever came from human throat. It began with "Old Dog Tray," and went on with "Ben Bolt" and skipped away to "Annie Laurie," all popular favorites at that period.

To those who know a song, the air utters the words as distinctly as though they were sung. The statement

never find

had not been whistled twice before Edna tripped into the house, extinguished the "camphere lamp," caught up her hat and came out again, locking the door and putting the key in her pocket. Before Alice had

"Wept with delight if you gave her a smile,
Or trembled with fear at your frown."

she was tripping along in the trembling shadows of the pine-grove, and while the whistler was still vowing that

"For Bonnie Annie Laurie,
He would lay him doon and dee,"

he heard a step and saw a gleam of white muslin, and dropping from the rock where he has perched himself, took Edna March in his arms.

He was a very handsome and very young man, who wore the uniform of a West Point cadet, and risked a good deal in rowing across the Hudson at that hour to see his pretty sweetheart.

Tonight, for the first time, Edna March and Dick Walworth talked seriously of the future.

"You shall never have a care from which I can defend you," said the young man. "I shall guard you well, my jewel; our home will be a happy one."

"I have never had a real home in my life," said Edna. "To be sure, I have my mother, but she is always wretched. My parents quarreled and separated when I was a little child. I have often said that I would never marry. Fancy loving and being happy, and believing the man one loved to be perfection, and then discovering that he was false and wicked and small. Old Hanna, our servant, declares that my father was all that. He drank a great deal of wine, and when he was under its influence, my mother was sometimes even beaten. At last she called upon the law to aid her, and it did. She left him, taking me with her. Over and over again he did his best to get me back. It was the terror of my childhood that he should steal me some time."

When at last, they parted, it was very tenderly. Young Walworth walked to the garden gate with Miss March and left her there.

Two weeks later, having crossed the river to their rendezvous many times, without finding her there, having whistled his signal and haunted the house in the moonlight like a ghost,

having written and received no reply, Cadet Walworth asked for leave to go see an old friend, obtained it, and taking his courage in both hands, walked up to Mrs. March's cottage in the light of day and rang the bell.

An old black servant opened the door and stood solemnly shaking her head at him.

"She's dead," she said. "Died this mawning before daylight."

"Edna dead!" he gasped, and staggered back against the columns of the porch.

"No, sah; Mrs. March, I is speaking of," said the black woman. "I don't know you, sah, but you call young miss by her fuss name, like you was ole friends!"

"We are," he said, "If you will give her this card, she will send me some message, even if she will not see me."

The old woman looked at him sharply.

"I nussed her when she was a baby," she said. "But I didn't know

Hanna are you

asked.

"I am Hanna," she answered. "Who is you, sah?"

"My name is Walworth, and your lady has promised to marry me," said the young cadet. "I am a West Point man, as you see. Now take my card."

"Young man," replied the negress, "I'd give mo' dan I ever 'spects to have in dis worl' to know where to find Miss Edna."

She came out upon the porch, shutting the door softly behind her, and told him a tale that froze his blood with horror.

Edna March had not been seen by her mother or Hanna since the evening she met him in the grove. She had not slept in her bed that night; the sitting room door was found locked and the key gone.

Walworth told his tale to his officers; told at least how the girl he had hoped to marry had disappeared, and 20 soldiers were sent across the river to aid him in his search for her body.

They found nothing but a blue ribbon she had worn, blown hither and thither by the wind.

Years passed on, Dick Walworth had been "Captain" Walworth for a long while. West Point days lay far away; the memory of his pretty love was like that of a beautiful dream. Our late war had been fought, and peace had come again, and he had the reputation of a brave soldier. He had no longer the slender waist of the young cadet; he was a large man, and there were a few silver threads in his hair already.

After a long absence he had returned, in company with other officers who had distinguished themselves in the service of their country, to revisit their alma mater. It was just such another high as that on which the first night, and on the morning came up, the wish to revisit the place of their old rendezvous grew strong within him.

He walked down to the wharf and hired a boatman to take him across.

At the old spot he caused the man to beach the boat, and bade him wait until his return; it would be but a few moments, he said. Then he made his way to the pine-grove, and found the very moss-grown rock on which they two, Edna and himself, had so often sat side by side—where he had always waited for her.

"How well I remember our signal!" he said to himself, and began to whistle. Old Dog Tray's fidelity was proclaimed, and Alice, with hair so brown, was remembered, and then

"Maxwellton's braes are bonny," and the clear notes said to any who might be listening:

"For Bonnie Annie Laurie I'd lay me doon and dee."

As the last note died away, a woman dressed in white stood before him.

Splashes of golden moonlight rested on her hair, her shoulders, the folds of her gown, the hands she outstretched toward him, and he cried: "Edna, is it your ghost?" But did not mean a word of it, for he knew well that it was a living woman who stretched her arms toward him and whom he clasped to his heart.

"I knew it could only be you who whistled our signal," she said. "Of course, so famous as you are now, I had heard you were at West Point—and I was so glad that you remembered old times," she said, falteringly, and trying, after the first embrace, to draw herself away from him.

"And I thought you dead, and mourned you," the soldier said. "And

for your sweet sake, though I believed you in your grave."

"I myself feel as though I had been dead," she answered; "only not in heaven. That night when we parted, Dick, I stood upon the porch and listened until I heard your oars upon the water; then, as I was about to open the door, a hand clutched my arm."

"That was the last I knew for many hours. It was my father who had seized me; he gained his point at last and stole me from my mother. He took me to Italy, and there I lived, without a friend, for years. At last he died. He was not poor, and what he had was mine by law, and I got back to America at last."

"Old Hanna lived alone in our cottage, which my mother had left her. She told me all. I have been very miserable; but I was glad to hear in what esteem men held you, and tonight, when I heard your whistle, I—I could not refrain from coming to you."

He took her in his arms and kissed her.—Mary Kyle Dallas, in The Woman's National Daily.

BOY'S CORNER

DRINKING A TEAR.

"Boys, I won't drink 'less you take what I do, said old Bill Jones in reply to an invitation. "He wants to run us on castor oil and brandy," said one who would willingly take the oil to get the brandy. "No, boys; I'm square; you take what I do and I'm with you." He was a toper of long standing and abundant capacity, so the boys agreed and stood along the bar.

"Mr. Bartender," glass of water." "What! Water!" "Yes, water." Let me tell you how I come to take it.

Let me tell you how I came to take it. Last fall a number 'o us went a fishin'. We took a flask o' brandy with us and had a heap o' fun. Long toward night I got drunk and laid down under a tree and went to sleep. The boys thought it was a good joke on me and they left me there and went back to town. They told on me and my boy got hold of the report and told it at home.

"Wall, I laid under that tree all night, and the next morning when I woke up there set my wife, right thar by me. She didn't say nuthin' but I saw she was achokin'. I got up and looked at her, and I said, 'I wish I had suthin' to drink,' and she took a cup she had fetched with her and

went down to where a spring biled up. She fetched me a cup o' water and as she handed it to me she loaned over a little to hide her eyes and I saw a tear drop into the water. I took the cup and drunk the water and the tear, and, raisin' my head, I vowed I'd never drink my wife's tears again. I saw that I had been drinkin' them for twenty years, and, boys, I'm goin' to stop." — Charles R. Barrett.

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