

## OAT-TAILS.

Clear, dark, and cool a shallow pool  
Lies underneath the summer sky.  
Low rippling in the reedy grass  
As windward winds go tripping by.  
The Nightingale and the Lark.  
When the fairies are all for their dances  
drest,  
When day's discords in the distance fall,  
When the robins and wrens are asleep in the  
nest,  
Then list to the note of the nightingale!  
But when diamonds glint on the dewy  
swale,  
When star-drops are fading spark by spark,  
And the little birds all the dawning hail,  
Oh, hark to the song of the merry lark!

When over the hills the silver crest  
Is pouring enchantment on mere and  
vale,  
And the world lies hushed in a dreamy rest,  
Then list to the note of the nightingale!  
But when the bright sun dight in golden  
mail  
Flames over the tree-tops in the park,  
And the world goes again on its busy trail,  
Oh, hark to the song of the merry lark!

## HYMN.

If Il Penseroso's mood prevail,  
Then list to the notes of the nightingale!  
But whenever L'Allegro wags, then hark,  
Oh, hark to the song of the merry lark!  
—American Magazine.

## A FORTUNATE CHANCE.

To say that Prudence Pringle disliked the sterner sex is saying very little; she held them in utter detestation, individually and collectively.

According to tradition, this was owing to some bitter wrong inflicted upon her heart when it was young and tender. But however this may be, the antipathy above-mentioned was too real to be mistaken.

For over thirty years no man's foot had desecrated her dwelling. Even the old man who sawed her wood and did odd jobs about the house received his pay standing under the kitchen window, Miss Prudence dropping the amount into his hand with averted eyes and an audible sniffle, expressive of her disgust at this unavoidable contact with the detested sex.

Miss Pringle's family consisted of herself, an elderly female domestic, and her niece Ruth. She had taken Ruth, when a child, with the avowed determination of making her as inveterate a man-hater as herself. And in case she succeeded in her laudable design, it was her intention to leave her the bulk of her property—"not otherwise," as she often assured Cousin Jonas, the next heir-at-law.

Jonas Quimby was a stiff, sour, disagreeable old bachelor, for whom Ruth had a particular dislike, on account of the pleasant way he had of snubbing and lecturing her whenever they met.

He had remained single in the hope of eventually inheriting his cousin's property, knowing her aversion to matrimony, and therefore regarded Ruth's adoption by her aunt in the light of a personal grievance.

But he took great comfort from Miss Pringle's repeated assurance; for he knew that young girls take as naturally to love as flowers take to dew and sunshine.

Every evening Ruth was catechised after the following fashion.

"Each man on the face of the earth is false-hearted and treacherous?"

"Yes, aunt," was Ruth's dutiful response.

"Especially young men?"

"Yes, aunt."

"And you must never have anything to do with them in any way or shape?"

"I never will, aunt."

Whereupon Ruth was dismissed to her chamber, with a grim smile of approval.

But Miss Pringle did not trust entirely to precept; Ruth was kept strictly from all contact with the outer world, never being allowed to go in the street without either herself or her attendant damsel to act as guard and defence.

And with such a formidable guard, bold, indeed, was the youth who ventured upon a second admiring glance at Ruth's pretty face; for pretty it was in spite of the ugly bonnets she was forced to wear.

But the little blind god laughs at all such precautions.

It happened that Miss Pringle was very fond of strawberries, so, as soon as they were ripe, she sent Ruth down to the meadow behind the house to gather some for tea, strictly charging her to "look and speak to no man."

Now it curiously enough happened that Mr. Edgar Haven, who caught a glimpse of Ruth tripping down the lane, was suddenly reminded of a similar wish expressed by his mother, and animated by a filial desire to gratify it, seized a basket and proceeded in the same direction.

Now Edgar knew his young neighbor by name and sight, and politely accosting her, offered to show her where the berries were much more plentiful than where she was picking. Startled by his unexpected appearance, Ruth's first impulse was to drop her basket and run; but his look and tone were so gentle, his smiles so winning, and his eyes so beautiful; and then it would have been so rude!

So she not only stayed, but let him take her where the ground was red with the ripe and luscious fruit, and even accepted his proffered assistance in filling her basket.

And then they began to talk, Edgar drawing her out with so much tact that Ruth began to feel quite at ease with him, though she was still somewhat shy of the glances of respectful admiration that the young man directed towards her blushing face.

So, when they separated, doubts began to stir the gentle heart of Ruth as to whether young men were such dreadful creatures after all, or, if they

ger of starvation. These facts were well known to General Bragg, and for these events he was quietly waiting. Bragg was well acquainted with the topography of the country and knew

meadow to gather strawberries, and, curiously enough, Edgar Haven was either there or followed soon after. He always returned empty handed, but with his heart full of the soft blue eyes into which he had gazed, and the sweet voice to which he had listened.

And as for Ruth, she began to repeat her customary catechism in a much less assured tone and manner, and considerable inward demurring.

"Are all young men so very bad, aunt?" she once ventured to ask.

"To be sure they are, child," snapped out Miss Pringle. "It is impossible for me to give you any idea of their deceit and wickedness."

Ruth sighed and betook herself to her chamber, her heart full of the mental exception to her aunt's sweeping assertion.

As Cousin Jonas was thought to be, to use her own words, "—on, a man, at the worst," and having disavowed, both practically and orally, any inclination towards the chief folly and weakness of his sex, Miss Pringle occasionally condescended to hold converse with him through the door, or window, or pickets of the fence which surrounded her garden.

One day Jonas saw Ruth and her aunt at work in the garden, and stopped to say a word to the latter.

Ruth was at the other end of the garden, tying up a rosebush, that was drooping to the earth with the weight of its fragrant burden.

"Miss Ruth is growing up very pretty," groaned the old hypocrite, with a doleful shake of the head.

Miss Pringle glanced at Ruth in dismay. True; so she was. The blush-roses were not half so fair and sweet as the bright young face that was bending over them.

"And there's more than one of the same opinion, I'm thinking," added Jonas, slyly, pointing to the spot where Edgar Haven had been standing, for some minutes, gazing at the pretty picture before him, with all his soul in his eyes.

"Good-morning, Miss Pringle," said Edgar, as soon as he saw he was observed. "I was going to ask you for one of your blush-roses."

"It's another kind of a rose he's after," muttered Jonas with a sardonic grin.

The pleasant bow and smile that accompanied Edgar's words would have found their way to almost any other heart, but they only added fuel to the irate spinster's fury and indignation.

"Go into the house this instant, Ruth," she shrieked. "As for you, young man," she added, turning to Edgar, and making a fierce lunge at him with her cane; "if you're not off instant, I'll—I'll send for a policeman."

With a glance of compassion at the retreating girl, and a ditto of defiance at Jonas, who seemed to be enjoying his discomfiture hugely, Edgar walked off.

After this Ruth was never allowed to stir abroad without her aunt or Polly, the old domestic, at her heels.

Poor Ruth! these were sorrowful days for her. Sometimes she caught a glimpse of Edgar in the distance, but never dared to look twice at him.

But one day Polly and her mistress went out, taking the precaution, however, to lock the doors after them. And as Ruth sat, with her sewing lying idly upon her knee, and her heart far away, the object of her thoughts suddenly made his appearance through the open window.

Ruth was in a perfect tremor of delight and alarm.

"If my aunt should return and find you here!" she cried, as she blushing released herself from his arms.

"I don't care if she does," said Edgar, taking a seat upon the sofa, and drawing Ruth down beside him. "The old ogress! What does she say about me, Ruth? What terrible crime does she charge me with?"

"She says that you are a—man!" faltered Ruth, as she hid her eyes on her lover's shoulder.

"And so I am," returned the young man, laughing. "And I never so rejoiced in that self-same fact until I knew you, darling. I could not love you half so well if I were a woman!"

Ruth hardly knew what to say in reply to this logic, but she knew that she was very happy seated by his side, with his arm round her, and wished that it was not so fleeting.

In this way, Edgar continued to have several interviews with Ruth, unknown to anyone except Jonas Quimby, who slyly watched the pair, chuckling over the certainty that it gave him of inheriting his cousin's long-coveted estate.

The lovers laid many plans to bring about the realization of their mutual wishes, but none of them seemed feasible. And finally death saved them any further trouble by suddenly foreclosing the long mortgage he had held upon Ruth's grim old guardian.

Miss Pringle left a will, in which she bequeathed her whole estate, both real and personal, to her niece Ruth. But to this was added the following singular codicil:

"Whereas it has long been my settled conviction that every man, born on the face of the earth, is cruel, deceitful and treacherous, in case my niece, Ruth Pringle, marries any such, the property devised to her in the above will shall go to my cousin, Jonas

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## Taste in Whiskey.

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