THE VALLEY OF LOST CHILDREN.

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The two of them atood together and watched the boy, and he, a brave little fellow near upon his fourth birthday, having no knowledge that he was watched, hammered a big tom-ent with right lusty strokes, sociding, it the while for having killed a "mires," Presently the cat made its escape, tollowed by the boy, whose chutby little lers twinkled in the aunlight, and whose tossed head of rolden tangle was as a star of hope to the watchers. As he vanished among the nearer bushes the woman pulled at the man's sleeve. "Our by," she said, in a low voice. "Aye, Sus'n, thet's so," he replied, and laid a great arm about her neck in a manner which was not displeasing to her. They were neither of them young, and

"Aye, Sus"n, thet's so," he replied, and laid a great same shout her neek in a manner which was not displeasing to her.

They were neither of them young, and marriage had come late in life; for fortuce had dealt hardly with the man, so that he had been unable to take her to wife in the earlier days. Yet she had waited, and at last a sufficiency, had been attained, so that in the end they had come together in the calm happiness of middle life. Then had come the boy, and with his coming a touch of something like passionate joy had crept into their lives.

It is true that there was a mortgage upon the farm, and the interest had to be paid before Abre'm could touch his profits; but what of their He was atrong, uncombant of the would he old enough to lend a hand; though Abra'm had a secret hope that before that time he would have the mortgage cleared off and be free old all his profits.

For a while longer they stood together, and so, in a little, the fooy came running back out of the bushes. It was ovidens that he must have had a tumble, for the knees of his wee knickers were staired, with clay marks. He run up to the and held out his left hand, into which a thorn was sticking; yet he made no moyement to ask for sympathy, for was he not a man?—a, very luch of his little four-year body! His intense mathiness will be the better understood when I explain that upon that day he had been "breeked," and four years old in brecks has a mighty savor of moniliness.

His father pluvked the thora from his hand, while his mother made shift to remove some of the clay; but it was wet, and so decided to leave it until it had dried somewhat.

"Her ter put ye back inter ahorts," threatened his mother; whereat the little

and she decided to leave it until it had dried somewhat.

"Hev ter put ye back inter shorts," threatened his mother; whereat the little man's face showed a comprehension of the direness of the threat.

"Ne! so I no!" he pleaded, and lifted up to her an ensarring glance from dangerous baby eyes.

Then his mother, being like other women, took him into her arms and all her regret was that she could take him no closer.

"Note on other beginded, and lifted up to her an ensouring flance from the produced, and the state of the produced of the produced and the state of the produced of the produc

the grave, and, rustling over the leaves of his book, found the place. He began to read in a steady voice. At the first word Abra'm uncovered, and stood there lean-ing upon his spade; but his wife ran for-ward and fell upon her knees near the old

man,
And so for a solemn while no sound but
the aged voice. Presently he stretched
out his hand to the earth beside the grave,
and, taking a few grains, lossed them upon
the dead, commending the spirit of the
child into the Everlasting Arms. And
so, in a little, he had made an ond.
When all was over, the old man spread
out his hands above the tiny grave as
though invoking a blessing. After a
moment he spoke; but more to himself
than they who were near:—
"Leetle One," he said, in a half whinper, "mathe yell near wit the yell o'
mine in you valley o' ther. lost childer.
Ye'll tell hur's I'm prayin, ter thar Rather;
's [Fill purmit these ole sinner ter comeingh'er sain."

And after that he, knelt awhile, as,
though in prayer. In a little he got upon
his feet, and, stretching out his hands
lifted the woman from her knees. 'Then,
for the first time, she spoke,
"Reckon I'll never see 'im no mor,' she
said, in a quiet, toneless voice, and without
tears.

The old man looked into her face, and,

The old man looked into her face, And so for a solemn while no sound but

tears.
The old man looked into her face, and, having seen much sorrow, knew somewhat of that which as suffered. He took one of her cold lands between his old withered ones, with a strange gesture of

withered ones, with a strange gesture of reverence.

"Hev no bibterness, Ma'am," he said.
"I know ye lack ther, pow'r jest-now ter say. Ther Lord gey, an' ther Lord 'ath teken away; 'blessed be ther Name o' ther Lord,' but I reckon 'E don't 'spect mon'n ye can gey.

"Es snighty tender w'i them 'as stricken."

As he spoke he was stroking her hand, unconsciously, as though to com'etch her.

'a is stricken.'

As he spoke he was stroking her hand, unconsciously, as though to comfort her.' Yet the woman remained dry-eyed and set-featured; so that the old man, seeing her need of stirring, bade her "set" down wisle he told her a "sit" of a tale."

"Ye'll know," he began, when she was seated, "a I unnerstan hoo mighty sore ye feel, w'en I tell ye I lost a wee gell o' mine way back."

He stopped a moment, and the woman's eyes turned upon him with the first dawning of interest.

"I wor suthin' like yew," he continued. "I didn't seem able nohow ter get goin' sgain in ther affairs o' these 'arth. I cudn't est, 'n I cudn't set, 'n I cudn't s

I come ter think o' et, an' no closes; but I guess closes wer'n't needed; fer 't must hev bin like a 'tarnal summer down thar; no

The old man stopped a moment, as though to meditate upon this point. He was still stroking the woman's hand, and also, perhaps because of the magnetism of his sympathy, was crying silently. In a moment he resumed:—
"It wer' jest after discoverin' ther childer's I made out 's than' wer' no cliff the third of the valley upon me left. Insted o' cliff, et seemed ter me 's a mighty wall o' shadder went acrost from one side ter there end o' ther valley upon me left. Insted o' cliff, et seemed ter me 's a mighty wall o' shadder went acrost from one side ter there other. I war' starin' and wondern', w' en a voice whispered low in me carry, w' en a voice whispered low in me carry, w' en a voice whispered low in me carry, w' en a voice whispered low in me carry, and the word of the start of the st

The woman stood up.
"Guess I'll pray thet way's well," she aid simply. The old man nodded, and turning, waved

phrivelled hand towards the west, where

The old man nodded, and turning, waved a shrivelled hand towards the west, where the "new was "sinking."

"That reminds one of death," he said slowly; then, with sudden energy, "I tellive lbar's no sunset ever 'ours 'e don't tellive l'entre 'e don't hand to 'n ight 'n death; but 'tes ther unwrapping o' ther flog o' dawn 'n Life in some other part o' there'arth."

And with that he got him to his feet, his old face agiow with the dying light. "And with that he got him to his feet, his old face agiow with the dying light. "May," he said quietly. "Thar Voice hev called, 'n I must jest to."

He turned and took off his old hat to the women. For a moment he stood thus, looking into her tear-stained face. Then, abruptly, he stretched out an arm and pointed to the vanishing day.

"Wight 'n sorrow 'n death come upon ther 'arts,' but in the Valley o', ther Loot Childer es light 'n joy 'n life elar-rank."

"And the woman, weary with grief, looked hack at him with very little bone in

"I must go," he said. "Ther Voice 's sailin."

He crammed his hat upon his head.
"Till we meet in ther, voiley 'o ther at his less that and the cried, and then them into the surrounding dusk.

HI. Twenty years added their count to Eternity, and Abra'm and his wrife Sur'an had come upon old age. The years had dealtherly, with the twain of them and disaster overshadowed them in the shape. of foreclosure: for Abra'm had been unable to pay off the mortsage, and latterly the interest had fallen in arrears.

There came a fitter time of seving and scraping, and of low diet; but all to no purpose. The foreclosure was effected, and a certain morning ushered in the day when Abra'm and Sus'n were made homeless.

when 'Abra'm and Sus'n were made hamsless.

He found her, a little after dawn, kneel-before the ancient press. She had he lowest drawer open, and a little heap of clothing filled her lap. There was a ling guerney, a mail alled hee, a wee, wee pair of haby boy's trousers, and the knees were stained with clay. Then, with about it a most tearful air of manfulness, a "made" shire, with "real" buttoning wrissbands; but it was not at any of these that the woman looked. Her gaze, passing through helf-shed tears, was fixed upon something which she held out at arm's length. It was a diminutive pair of brutes, so terribly small, so unmistakably the pride of some manly minded baby by and so little, worst.

For the half of a minute Abra'm said no word. His face had grown very stern and ruged during the stress of those twenty, years' fight with poverty; yet a certain steely look faded out of his eyes as he noted that which his wife held.

The woman had not seen him, nor heard is the woman had not seen him, nor heard is a sure of the woman had not seen him, nor heard is a transporter of the women her workers and still are a brut we had not seen him, nor heard is a transport of the woman had not seen him, nor heard is the mean that we more that we more than the seen her women her we would be seen him, nor heard in the mean and that the woman had not seen him, nor heard the woman had not seen him woman had not seen him

noted that which his write held.

The woman had not seen him, nor heard his step; so that, unconscious of his presence, she continued to hold up the little suspenders. The man caught the reflection of her face in a little tinsel-framed mirror opposite, and saw her tears, and abruptly his hard-features gave a quiver that made them almost grotesque; it was such an upheaval of set grimness. The quivering died away, and his face resumed its old, iron look. Probably it would such an upheaval of set grimness. The quivering died away, and his face reumed its old, iron look. Probably it would have retained it had not the woman, with a sudden, extraordinary gesture of hopelessness, crumpled up the tiny braces and clasped them in her hands above her hair. The bowed forward almost on the face, and her old insuedles grew tense with the streas aho put upon that which she held. A few seconds of silence came and went; then a sob burst from her, and as e commenced to rook to and fro upon her kness.

Across the man's face-thiere', came again that quivering upheaval, as unaccustomed emotions betrayed their existence; he stretched forth a hand, that shook with half-conecious longing, towards an end of the Uraces which hung down behind the woman's neck and swayed as she rocked.

Abruptly, he seemed to come into possession of himself and drew back allently. He calmed his face, and, making a, noise with his feet, stepped over to where his wife kindle desolate. He put a great, crinkled hand upon her shoulder. "It wer' a powerful purty thought o' yon valley o' titer lost childer," he said quietly, meaning to waken her memory to it. "Aye! aye!" she gasped botween her

yon 'valley o' there lost childer,' he saud quietly, meaning to waken her memory to it.

"Aye! aye!" she gasped between her cobs: "But —" and she broke off, holding out to him the little suspenders.

For answer the man, natted her heavily on the shoulder, and thus a space of time went by, until presently she calmod. —

A little later he went out upon a matter to which he had to attend. While he was gone she gathered the wee garments hastily into a shawl, and when he returned the press was closed, and all that he saw was a small bundle which she held carclessly in one hand.

They left a little before noon, having singly and together visited a little mound at the foot of the hill. The evening saw them upon the verge of a great wood. They slept that night upon its outskirts, and the most day entered into its shades.

Through all that day they walked steadily. They had many a mile to go Sefore they reached their destination—the shantly of a distant relative with whom they hoped to find temporary shelter.

Twice as they walked Sus'n had spoken to here husband to stop and lister; but he explained.

"Kind o' singin' ot sounded like," she explained.

That night they camped within the heart

"Kind o singin ot sounded like," she explained.

That night they camped within the heart of the wood, and Abra'm made a great lire, partly for warmth, but more to seare away any evil thing which might be lurking amid the shadows.

They made a frugal supper off the poor things which they had brought with them, though Su'n declared she had no mind for caling, and, indeed, she seemed wofully tired and worn.

tired and worn

Then, it was just as she was about to lie down for the night, she cried out to

down for the night, sie cried out to Abra'm to hark.
"Singin," she declared. "Milluns o' shilder's voice."
Yet still her luxband heard nothing to you to another, as the night wind shook them.
For the better part of an hour after that she listened, but heard no further sounds,

"Hark!" And they all listened; but the farmer and his wife heard only a far distant moan, like the cry of the night wind rising.

The old man hasted to his feet.

"I must no," he said. "Ther Voice a sallin."

He crammed his hat upon his head.

"Till we meet in ther voiley o ther active lock childer," he cried, and went from them into the surrounding dust.

II.

Twenty years added their count to Etcanity, and Abra'm and his wife Sua'a had come upon sold age. The years had dealth hardly with the twain of them, and dealth forecoloure. Io Abra'm had been upon sold age. The years had dealth here worshadowed them in the shape of forecoloure. Io Abra'm had been upon sold age. The years had dealth is represented by the most of the mortages, and latterly the interest had fallen in arrears.

There came a hitter time of saving and scraping, and of low diet; but all to no purpose. The forecloure was effected, and a certain morning usbered in the day when abbria m are Suar were made home.

concourse of Little Ones: that can be concoived.

"My by! My by!" she murmured to
herself, and her gaze ran bungrily over
that inconceivable army.

"Eff only I cuid get down," she cried, and
in the same instant it seemed to her that
the side upon which she stood was less
steep. She stepped forward and commenced to clamber down. Presently she
walked. She had gotten hall way to the
bottom of the 'valley when a little maked
boy run from out of the shadow of a bush
inst ahead of her.

"Possy," she cried out. "Possy."
He turned and reced towards her, laughing gleefully. He leapt into her arms, and
so a little while of extraordinary contentment passed.

ment passed.

She loosed him, and bade him stand back

from her. "Eh!" she said, "yew've not growed one

MEI! She laid her bundle on the ground, and

She laid her bundle on the ground, and commenced to undo it.
"Guess they'll fet yo same as ever," she murmured, and held up the little trousers for him to see; but the boy showed no engeraces to take them.

She put out her hand, to him, but he ran from her. Then she ran after him, carrying the little trousers with her. Yet also could not eatth him, for he sludded her with an elf-like agility and case.
"No, no, no," he screamed out in a very passion of glee."
She coises to chase him, and came to a

She ceased to chase him, and came to a stand, hands upon her hips. "Come yew 'ere, Possy, immediate!" ahe called in a tone of command. "Come yew

called in a tone or commune.

'erel'

But the boby elf was in a strange mood, and disobeyed her in a manner which made her rejoice that she was his mother.

"Oo tarnt ketch me," he cried, and at that she dropped the little knickers and went re-chase of him. He roced down the remaining half of the slope into the valley and she followed, and so same to a country where there are no trousers—where youth is, and age is not.

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When Abra'm waked in the carly morn he was chill and stiff; for during thread to wer the form of this jackst and graded to wer the form of the property of the country of t