

And we, whose eyes so long had lit  
On hedgerows bare and trees a-shiver,  
Chanced where the sudden radiance smit  
The Marybuds beside the river.

Then joy, like his whose darkling quest  
By rath or Druid ring is crowned  
With gleam of fairy gold possessed,  
Thrilled in us as we gazed around.—

Behind, the grey receding gloom,  
Before, the roofs of Axmouth town,  
And those rich rain-wet buds a-bloom  
Where seaward slow the stream glides down.

Marybuds is the old English name given to the deep-yellow blossoms of the marsh marigold.

## Not Quite Such a Duffer.

By SOMERVILLE GIBNEY,

Author of "Kid's Joke," "Under His Very Nose," etc., etc.



None in Wroxby was able to make out what Andrew Herepath could see in Mary Fennel. Andrew Herepath never saw fit to enlighten the general curiosity, but followed his own inclinations, and married her, and by so doing made her mistress of the Wroxby Mill-house. But considering all things there was some

excuse for the general speculation and curiosity.

Andrew Herepath was a "close man" his neighbours said, meaning thereby he had made money, and knew how to take care of it. He had succeeded his father years before as miller of Wroxby, and had occupied the mill-house, retaining the old maid Sarah as his housekeeper. There were pretty girls, and girls ready and willing to marry in Wroxby, but Andrew was proof against them all. He would chat with, chaff, and tease them, but he would go no further, and there was not one among them who could truthfully declare she had made an impression on the miller. And so the years went on, until he had turned forty, and was looked upon as a confirmed bachelor. There were two, however, in Wroxby, to whom this state of things appeared eminently desirable, and they were Mrs. Frost, the miller's widowed sister, and her son Jim, Andrew's only relatives; and Jim regarded himself as the miller's heir, and the future occupant of the mill-house.

And so things continued, until one day a fragile and delicate looking girl and her even more delicate looking little brother took up their quarters in Wroxby as lodgers at Mrs. Thorp's. In all little country places gossip is rampant, and it was not very long before the whole town was aware that Mary

Fennel came from London, where she had been employed in a bookbinding firm, and where she had lost her never very robust health in nursing her mother through a long illness that only ended in her death, and further that it was through the kindness of the vicar of the parish where they had resided that a sufficient amount had been forthcoming to allow her and her brother to enjoy a sojourn in the country, and gain a little strength before she resumed her daily occupation.

But Andrew Herepath had not seen her many times before he determined that it would not be his fault if she ever returned to London to live. And the inhabitants of Wroxby soon came to a like conclusion, while at the same time speculating on what he could see in the girl. At any rate, he must have seen something, for, as has been said, he married her, and installed her as mistress of the mill-house. This proceeding was not regarded by all with favour; indeed, Mrs. Frost declared "it was a pack of nonsense, and Andrew ought to be ashamed of his self." He did not appear to be; on the contrary, he seemed extremely contented and happy.

There was one condition, and only one, Mary made when accepting her burly wooer, and that was, that she was not to be separated from her young brother. "O' course not, lass, o' course not. Charley will come with you," said Herepath, "and I'll be bound it won't be long before we put some roses in those pasty cheeks, and some strength in those match sticks he calls arms and legs." If the truth must be told Charley was a little afraid of his new brother-in-law. He was so big and strong, he spoke in such a rough way, and when he caught hold of him Charley felt as if all his bones would be crushed to a jelly. But Andrew was the kindest of men, and if he at times rather overpowered Charley it was only because the boy was weak, and unaccustomed to country ways.

When Mary had been married some two months, and the summer weather had come to an end, Charley's long holiday terminated, and he commenced work at the Wroxby school. He had vastly improved both in health and condition since he had left London, but he could not rival his country-bred schoolfellows either in strength or pluck. He was a poor hand at their

games and amusements, and was always more at home reading or dreaming than at football or paper-chasing. Still, he might have got on well with his companions had it not been for Jim Frost.

Jim, to put it plainly, hated Charley, for he looked upon him and his sister Mary as intruders in the mill-house, and likely to damage his future prospects with regard to his Uncle Andrew; and in consequence he did his best to make Charley's school life a burden to him. He never tired of teasing and bullying the little fellow, and by calling attention to his weakness and effeminacy making him look ridiculous in the eyes of his schoolfellows.

Nor did he stop here; in another form he continued his persecutions at home, and was continually running down Charley to his Uncle Andrew.

At first the miller only laughed, and said he would improve in time as he grew stronger, and bade his nephew be kind to him, and look after him well. But Jim's stories were so constantly repeated, and the miller's personal observation of Charley's manner and proceedings seemed so fully to confirm them, that at last he began to look upon the boy as "a waster," as he termed him, and his manner towards him changed. He considered Mary was spoiling him by petting, the lad wanted knocking about and shaking up or he would be fit for nothing in the battle of life later on, and by way of carrying out his theory he took to speaking sharply to him, laughing at him, telling him he was more like a girl than a boy, setting him jobs to do and errands to run that would exercise his strength, and keep him employed.

When this change came about Charley was considerably astonished, and did not like it. The truth was he *had* been spoilt more or less; never strong, he had been allowed his own way, and had been spared as much as possible the exertions and fatigues that usually fall to boys in his class of life. And now he felt the change, and complained to his sister. But Mary was a young woman with common sense, and implicit confidence in her husband's opinion, and so, while sympathising to a certain extent with the lad, she at the same time urged him on to do his best, and prove to Andrew that he was not such a *nincompoop* as Jim had represented him; and that night, when alone with her husband, she did not forget to ask him not to overtax Charley. "Overtax him! not I, lass," replied Andrew. "I'll not overtax him, I only want to make a man of him, and I'll be careful not to hurt the little chap. I wish he were more like Jim, now."

"I don't," said Mary. "He may be weak and girlish, I don't say he isn't, but he's all right at heart, and that's what—well, some folks are not that."

"They're not, lass, you're right there." And so the matter dropped, but Jim was quick to perceive his uncle showed more consideration thenceforth to Charley, and this did not please Master Jim. However, if one method failed he would try others. His next plan was himself to assume a more friendly attitude towards the boy, and, having partially won his confidence, to lead him, or, rather, get him, into scrapes and mischief, always taking care not to appear himself. This was no difficult task, for Charley's ignorance of country ways and customs caused him to become a ready victim, and his own notions of honour forbade his betraying his instigator and leader. Space

will not permit of any of these escapades being set out, and it must suffice to state that some of them were serious, and brought down the miller's wrath on the boy's head.

Charley was losing his character. Jim was jubilant, and reckoned it would only require a few more straws to break the back of his uncle's patience, as regarded Charley, and he set himself to work with renewed energy to compass this end.

At length, very unexpectedly, an opportunity occurred which Jim eagerly seized on. But, in order to make this clear, a little explanation will be needful.

The wheel of Andrew's mill was worked by the waters of a small river or stream called the Wrox. Some short distance above the mill-house they were formed into a kind of pond by means of sluice-gates, one of which led into the mill-race, one into the ordinary course of the stream, and one into a catch-water drain which was used to carry off the superfluous water in case of a flood. Ordinarily, when the mill was not at work, the one leading into the bed of the stream was kept partially up, and the water escaped through it, but when the mill was going this was closed, and that leading to the race opened, so that the waters had to work for their freedom. The smaller sluice leading into the catch-water was very rarely used.

For some time before the day on which the following event occurred the weather had been rainy, and the River Wrox was full, but on this particular day, a Wednesday, and consequently a half-holiday, the prospect seemed brighter, and the rain had ceased. Andrew, taking advantage of the change, had after dinner dispatched Charley with an account to one of his customers, who lived some three or four miles away, so that he was not expected back before dark. Jim was spending his half-holiday with his uncle, in the mill.

As soon as tea was over Jim said:

"I think I'll be off home, uncle; it looks as if we were going to have some more rain before long, and I don't want to get wet."

"Yes, Jim, it's coming sure enough. I'll come out with you, and see the sluices are all right, for we shall have it before morning."

While his uncle was getting his hat a sudden thought struck Jim, and he snatched up a small pen-knife that was lying on a side-table, and, having said good-bye to Mary, who had not observed his action, followed his uncle out.

"There," said Andrew a little later, as they stood beside the mill-pond, "I've raised those two gates a bit, and we shall be all right now. I wish Charley was back; it's beginning to rain already. He'll come in for a soaker. Be off, lad, and get home as fast as you can."

"Good night, uncle," and away ran Jim—for a certain distance, then he stopped, and looked back. His uncle was just re-entering the mill-house. The lad waited a few minutes, and then crept back to the mill-pond. Those few minutes had made a difference; it had grown suddenly dark. Had anyone been watching from the mill-house they could not have seen him. He had a large stone in his hand, and with it, after a blow or two, he succeeded in smashing the cast-iron cogwheel in which the ratchet of the sluice-gate of the catch-water worked.

"There," he muttered, as the gate slid down into its normal position. "They won't be able to keep that up unless they hold it. Now for the other," and, turning to the sluice leading into the river, with tremendous exertion, and he was a strong lad, he managed to turn the handle a few inches, and release the catch, when the gate sank down and cut off the stream of escaping water. Close by the wooden framework, on a tuft of grass, he dropped the penknife he had secured, and then, as he left the place, he said with a chuckle: "Now it only has to rain cats and dogs for a bit, and if that young duffer Charley doesn't get into the biggest row he's got into yet my name's not Jim Frost," and, as if in answer to his words, the inky darkness was rent by a vivid flash of lightning, followed very closely by a tremendous crash of thunder.

"That's all right. Couldn't be better," he laughed, as he ran across the meadows.

With that flash commenced one of the most extraordinary and terrible storms that had ever visited Wroxby, when the time of year (it was February) was taken into consideration.

It was nine o'clock the same evening, and the miller was sitting smoking his pipe one side of the parlour fire, while his wife worked on the other.

"I wish Charley were safe at home," said Mary, looking up. "I should think he *must* be staying somewhere. He'd never try to come home in this storm."

"O' course not, Mary. He's safe enough. My word! How it does come down, to be sure. Do you hear? Hark!"

"Why, Andrew that is more than rain. It sounds like the rush of water," said Mary, pausing in her work.

"You're right, lass," replied her husband, rising from his chair, and going to the window, from before which he drew back the curtain. He pressed his face against the glass for a moment or two, and then exclaimed excitedly—

"Mary, come here, what's this? It looks like water all over the garden."

His wife threw down her work, and hurried to her husband's side. "It *is* water," she cried. "What can have happened?"

"There must be something wrong up at the mill-pool. I must go and see at once. And yet I gave a look round just before the storm commenced, and all was right then. Go and get the lantern lighted, for it's as black as pitch, while I put on my coat."

"No, no, Andrew, don't go out to-night. It wouldn't be safe, and you'll get wet to the skin."

"No, I sha'n't, I shall be all right. Get me the lantern at once, there's a good girl."

In a few minutes, Andrew, well wrapped up, and lantern in hand, was standing at his door, gazing in amazement at the flood that swept over his garden. What could have happened to account for it? He had left all safe a few hours before. Even as he watched, the water seemed rising, and if it continued to do so much longer it would flood the mill, and a large quantity of newly-ground flour would be ruined. It was still pouring, and the lightning was vivid and constant.

"You can't go out in this, dear," shouted Mary, standing close beside him, as a clap of thunder shook the house.

"I must. Go indoors and keep dry. I won't be long," and, making a virtue of necessity, he descended from the doorstep into the flood which nearly reached his knees, and made his way round the side of the house up the steep bank of the mill-pond. It was all he could do, for the water was rushing over the top of the bank, bringing down stones and grass and earth with it. He hurried on towards the sluices. The lantern gave but a feeble light, yet enough to show a form standing beside one of them.

"There's the villain I've got to thank for all this trouble," he muttered, as he approached. "I'll make it warm for him. What! Charley! What are you up to here, you rascal?"

"Oh! Andrew!" came the answer in a gasp. The hold on the sluice-handle was relaxed, and as it swung round the small form swayed, and with a moan sank back into Andrew's arms.

"Goodness! the lad's swooned!" and putting the lantern down, Andrew caught up the boy and hurried back to the house with him.

"Here, lass," he said, entering the parlour. "I've found Charley. He's fainted, look after him. I must get back to the sluices." And once more Andrew hurried through the flood, which was now pouring over the bank quicker than ever. He first went to the catch-water where he had found Charley, and raised the gate, but when he wished to fasten it discovered the cogwheel was missing, and then saw it broken in two, lying on the ground near.

"Charley never did that. He hasn't the strength," he said, as, being unable to fasten up the gate, he had to lower it, and turned towards the other one.

This he also found down, and it was all he could do to raise it, such was the pressure of water against it. He did get it up at last and secured, and the over-charged mill-pond relieved itself beneath it in a roaring, foaming torrent that raced down its proper channel. The danger was at an end. No more water came over the bank into the garden.

Andrew stood panting with his exertion, leaning against the sluice. Something white on the ground caught his eye, he picked it up. "My knife! How on earth did it come there?" And then he made his way back to the house.

He found Charley had recovered, and was telling Mary how he had been caught in the storm on his way home, and, being drenched in a few moments, had thought it best to hurry on instead of taking shelter, and how, on reaching the mill-pond, he had found it overflowing into the garden, and all the sluice-gates down, and had raised the one into catch-water, and not being able to fasten it up had remained holding the handle, since he was afraid to leave it, as he saw the water was coming into the pond far quicker than it was going out. He said he had shouted again and again, but the storm had drowned his voice, and so he had stood there till he felt he must drop.

Andrew listened quietly until the recital was finished, and then said—

"Thank ye, my lad, you're not such a young duffer after all."

"No, I should think not, Andrew; he's a brave, good boy, as I always said," smilingly exclaimed Mary.

Andrew did not smile, but continued, "Have you got a knife, Charley?"

"Yes, Andrew," and he took one from his pocket



"IT WAS STILL POURING, AND THE LIGHTNING WAS VIVID AND CONSTANT."

and gave it to his brother-in-law, who walked to the light with it, examined it, and said, "Umph!"

The next morning Andrew called on the Frosts, first thing, and had an interview with Master Jim.

It is needless to state what was said thereat beyond Andrew's final remarks. "I might have overlooked the mischief you have done, and the theft of *my* knife."

"But I didn't think it was *yours*," said Jim, desperately.

"Just so, you didn't. But your mean underhand attempt to damage another, who had done you no harm, I will *not* overlook. Take care never to show your face at the mill-house again as long as I am there."

## Photography for our Young People.

By B. DAVIDSON, *Secretary, Lewisham Camera Club.*

PART II.—*Fitting up the Dark Room—Chemicals required—Mixing our Solutions.*

HAVING provided yourself with the necessary apparatus, the next important step to take is to fit up your dark room.

I have already spoken about the "sensitiveness" of dry plates, but I must here tell you a little more about it. What do I mean by "sensitiveness"? If you examine a dry plate you will find it consists of a piece of glass covered with a thin layer, or "film," of a substance

that has a peculiar creamy appearance. It is composed of gelatine and bromide of silver. As long as light is kept away, so long the film will undergo no change; but, as soon as the least particle of light is allowed to reach it, a radical change takes place. This change cannot be seen at once, but only after the plate has been "developed"—a term you do not understand yet. This is what we mean when we say a plate is sensitive to light.

The only time light must be allowed to reach it is during the short "exposure" we give when we take off