

BIRCHBROOK HILL.

By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

A notesman sent the Birchbrook runs
Beneath the leaning trees;
That low, soft ripple is its own,
That still roar for the trees.

Of human signs it sees alone
The distant church-spire's tip,
And, ghost-like, on a bank of gray,
The white sail of a ship.

No more a toiler at the wheel,
It wanders at its will,
Nor dam nor pond is left to tell
Where once was Birchbrook Mill.

The timbers that mill have fed
Long since a farmer's fens;
His dovecotes are the stones that ground
The harvest of his fens.

Man trespasses here; but Nature loath
No right of her domain;
She waits, and she brought the old
Wild beauty back again.

By day the sunlight through the leaves
Falls on the moist, green sod,
And wakes the violet bloom of spring
And autumn's gold and red.

Its birches whisper to the wind,
The swallow dips her wings
In the cool spray, and on its banks
The gray song-sparrows sing.

—November Atlantic.

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

By EREN E. REKFOR.

"What a strange girl Miss Wayne is! Don't you think so?"

Miss Casilear asked the question of Hoyt Graham one morning when they were standing on the steps together. Miss Wayne was tying up red carnations in one of the beds down the path.

"I think her eyes are about as blue as the sky," said Miss Casilear, looking in the direction of Miss Casilear's eyes had taken.

"She seems quite different from most young women I know," said Miss Casilear.

"How, may I ask?" said Miss Casilear.

"In what does the difference consist?"

"She seems wholly truthful," answered Graham. "I see nothing artificial about her. She is frank and never flatters."

"She seems frank," said Miss Casilear, "but there is something about her that I do not understand and I doubt if you could if you knew of it."

"Tell me what you mean," said Miss Casilear.

"I cannot say," she said, "Miss Wayne is coming."

Cecile Wayne came up the path, and joined them. She had a sweet, true face, frank eyes, and an air of artlessness about her that Hoyt Graham felt sure was not assumed.

Presently Miss Casilear left them, and they sat and talked pleasantly for an hour. Those quiet talks of theirs were always pleasant ones in them they were listening to the lesson that is ever new in the lesson of loving.

One day, not long after that, Hoyt Graham asked Cecile Wayne to be his wife. She put her hand in his for answer, and he felt that he had won a true and faithful companion for his companion in the journey of life.

"I wonder if Beechwood is haunted?" Miss Casilear asked the question one morning at the breakfast table.

"I never heard of anything about the place," answered Mr. Wayne.

"Why did you ask, Miss Casilear? Have you seen one?"

"I hardly know," answered Miss Casilear. "I don't recall that I saw anything that was unusually strange, one last night, near the old clump of cedars at the end of the lawn. Did you see it, Miss Wayne?" she asked, turning suddenly to Cecile.

"I heard you stirring in your room after that, and thought perhaps you might have been looking out when I was."

"I saw no ghost," answered Miss Wayne. Hoyt Graham saw that her face had grown a trifle pale, and had a troubled look in all of her eyes.

"Tell us what you saw, Miss Casilear," said Mr. Wayne. "Was your ghost in traditional white, and did it melt into thin air?"

"Perhaps it is not a ghost," answered Miss Casilear. "I have never been deceived by my eyes, but I think not— with another keen look at Cecile, who kept her eyes upon her plate and pretended not to hear what was being said. But Hoyt Graham knew she did by the look in her face."

"What could Miss Casilear mean? There was evidently something at the bottom of the affair that he could not understand."

One day he and Cecile were in the parlor, reading Tennyson. He read the little song of *Vivian to Merlin*:
"In love, I love to love, I love to love,
In love, I love to love, I love to love,
In love, I love to love, I love to love,
In love, I love to love, I love to love."

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by-and-by will make the music mute,
And, ere widening, slowly silence all."

"It is not worth the keeping—let it go! But still it answers, darling. Answer no, and trust me all in all of it!"

He laid the book down, and there was a little thoughtful silence between them, which by-and-by he broke.

"I think there is a world of truth in that little rhyme. We can trust fully so long as confidence has not been shaken, but the moment distrust creeps in, all trust is gone. It must be perfect trust, or no trust at all." "Unfaith in sight is want of faith in all."

"You can trust me," she said, "with a half-earnestness. 'You believe that, don't you?'"

"How could I believe otherwise?" he answered, kissing her.

"Do believe the place is haunted," said Miss Casilear the next morning. "I saw the ghost again last night."

She looked across the table with that inexplicable smile on her face that Hoyt Graham had seen there before when the ghost of Beechwood was being talked about.

"And again he saw Cecile Wayne's face grow pale, and her eyes fall."

"Did you see any thing last night?" Miss Casilear asked, and he heard her moving about long after that."

"I saw no ghosts," answered Cecile.

A half-scorning look flashed across Miss Casilear's face. "What could it mean?"

"I don't know," she said, "mystery here. It began to interest him."

"It must be the place is haunted," went on Miss Casilear, as if anxious to cause Cecile as much embarrassment as possible, for she directed her remarks to her. "I was sitting at my window about 11 o'clock when I saw a white figure gliding down the avenue, and another figure, or ghost—whatever you choose to call it—met it there. I don't think it was a ghost. I imagined all this, for this is the third time I have seen the mysterious figures, and always after the house has grown quiet."

She kept her eyes on Cecile's face. Cecile never once looked up.

"Hoyt Graham was sitting at his desk, and all that passed. The triumphant look on Miss Casilear's face, the pale, half-frightened one on Cecile's."

"I wish you would tell me what you mean by your ghost stories," he said to Miss Casilear, when he met her on the veranda after breakfast.

"What would you think of a woman who, engaged to one man, kept telling interviews with another?" she asked, a world of meaning in her tone.

"Tell me what you mean," he said, and would have no more to say about it.

"That night felt dark and rainy. Now and then lightning flashed vividly across the inky sky, and long, terrible peals of thunder shook the house. The guests seemed in no mood for social intercourse and went to their rooms at an early hour."

Hoyt Graham did not feel like going to bed. He sat down by the window and looked out into the wild, black night.

Suddenly as a flash of lightning made

everything as light as day, he started, for there gliding down the avenue, was Miss Casilear's ghost.

He waited for another flash. Pretty soon it came, and by its light he saw, down by the stable old cedars at the end of the lawn not one figure, but two. A man and a woman, and the man's arms were about the woman's form, and, as the lightning lit the landscape, he saw the woman's face. He saw that the woman was Cecile Wayne.

He staggered as if a shaft of lightning had struck him. He had counted her so true, and she was false. He knew, now, what Miss Casilear meant. Suddenly a line of the song he had read rung through his brain, to the accompaniment of a long roll of far-off thunder.

"Unfaith in sight is want of faith in all."

Going down the hall next morning, Cecile Wayne met Hoyt Graham with a traveling bag over his arm.

"I am going away," he said, in answer to her questioning look. "I hoped I should not see you, I have left a letter for you. Of course after what I saw last night there can be no more between us."

She turned pale as death.

"Do not explain," she said.

"Do not attempt to," he answered coldly. "I am going away."

"Oh, wait, wait! Listen to me, for the love of God!" she cried, "let me tell you the truth, and you can not blame me so much."

But the man she appealed to with such agony in her eyes, never turned. He went down the path, stern and pitiless, with no answer for her beseeching and she fell prone upon the path, with such a cry as comes from a broken heart.

Two years after, Hoyt Graham stopped at a little rude cabin on a Western prairie, and asked for shelter for the night. A man was the only occupant of the place.

"You can stay," he said, and Graham sat down beside the door to rest himself after his long day's tramp.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon a grave, with a white board at its head. He got up and went to it. Bending down he read:

"CECILE WAYNE, AGED 28."

He turned toward the cabin door where the man stood watching him.

"I knew a woman whose name was Cecile Wayne," he said, and his face was pale with old memories.

"I cannot say," said the man, and he turned away.

"The Cecile Wayne I knew had no brother, I think," said Graham, coming back to the cabin. He sat down in the doorway and let his thoughts go back to the old summer. The man of the man whose sister was sleeping in the lonely prairie grave rested on the rule treads over which some wild flowers ran as they clambered up about the door. He caught a glimmer of a ring upon it, and his face grew pale.

"Was that your sister's ring?" Graham asked.

"Yes," the other answered, "What man would you think that?"

"The Cecile Wayne I knew, and the Cecile Wayne whose grave is yonder, were the same person," answered Graham. "I saw that ring upon her finger often. Tell me about her and her death."

"She died of a broken heart," Cecile Wayne's brother answered. "I was a wild and reckless fellow, in my younger days, and my father turned me out of doors. I went to sea, and I was the only son of the family after me who ventured to have anything to do with me. My sister managed to see me once in while, in spite of my father's threats. At last I told her my heart to come West and she tried to help me. It seemed that man she was engaged to saw her meet me one night, and he believed she was false to him. He refused to listen to any explanation of her conduct. My sister found out that he was trying to kill her, and he had her leave the old home. She came to me, and together we came here. She lived about a year, and died like a broken flower."

"My God! and I believed her false, and she was true to me!" cried Graham. "Oh, Cecile, forgive me!" and the strong man threw himself in passionate sorrow on the grave of the woman he had misjudged so cruelly, and all night long he lay there, and he never slept again.

"To forgive the wrong he had done her. Perhaps she did. Who knows?"

A New Game for Children.

We mention this game, which we believe has never appeared in print, because not only many may take part, but, like really good games, amusement and perhaps some instruction may be derived in playing it; and any number may play at the same time. Let us suppose that two children decide to play. This game of "Names." Each player is provided with a long slip of paper and a pencil, and if one of the players has a watch so much the better; if not, a clock will do. One commences by calling out: "Girls' names commencing with A; two minutes allowed." Each player then writes down all the girls' names that he (or she) can collect, and the names of the girls who have not thought of, and written down. Amabel, and so on through the list. The object of the game is to teach the children all girls' and boys' names. When the marks have been allotted for the names in the total the girls' names read out and noted on each slip. The players then proceed in a similar manner for all boys' names commencing with A, such as Alfred, Abel, Adam, etc. The names of the boys who have not thought of, and written down, are read out. If, for instance, all have written Amy, all cancel Amy, and count one mark. Say six players have Annabel, and four have not, each of the six has one mark, those who have not thought of, and written down Annabel, and so on through the list. The object of the game is to teach the children all girls' and boys' names. When the marks have been allotted for the names in the total the girls' names read out and noted on each slip. The players then proceed in a similar manner for all boys' names commencing with A, such as Alfred, Abel, Adam, etc. The names of the boys who have not thought of, and written down, are read out. If, for instance, all have written Amy, all cancel Amy, and count one mark. 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