

rough trunk of a solitary Lombardy Poplar, and embracing it for more than half its height with arms full of green leaves and hanging sprays. Beyond, looking out over its ocean of blossoms, blue mountains bound the whole horizon.

Away up in my big forest, above the hanging wood in which I have been finding so much pleasure and profit, where, I am afraid, more vigorous arms and other implements than saw and clipper will be needed, there where the great maples stand and the beeches spread their strong arms, I think there is the most beautiful thing I have seen this summer. It is a massive beech trunk, cut off say four feet from the ground, which stands firm, leaning to the south, clasping the earth by six mighty roots. Green mosses, soft and velvety, cover it on the north side to the height of three feet, and the chips of fine wood that flew from it when it was cut lie still undecayed at its side. It was not of those old trees which, having no life but in their heads, like some old people, die wholly at the stroke of the axe; for when the great top fell and was carried away, the old stump was alive in its heart, and when spring surged in its roots it put forth leaves with a superb abandon

all around its top from beneath the rough outer bark—leaves not like those of the usual Beech, quite straight and exquisitely proper in vein and color, but a riot of light and succulent greenery, crisp and curling like lettuce, a great circle of them, like a woven wreath laid on the sloping top of the pedestal by some reverent hand to greet every day the summer sun as he swings across the meridian.

I think of it and of my friendly trees in the winter nights when the snow lies deep, printed in every direction by myriads of little feet, and the frosty moon shines clear. In the silence there is a sudden sound as some one of the birch branches that I left unwittingly in the maze of tossing foliage drops sharply to the earth with a muffled sound. Then I am almost inclined to forgive the field-mice for their gnawing; but not quite. In the world of four dimensions pictures have three dimensions, and are therefore what we call solids. I think the trees may be pictures of the different thoughts of God. If, like King David, we would "find out a place for the temple of the Lord," still comes to mind the answering verse of the psalm, "Lo, we heard of the same at Ephrata, and found it in the wood."

## MARS.

BY GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY.

IT may be there are forms of human life  
Upon old continents of shrouded stars;  
It may be there are men grown mad with strife  
Among the fields and woods and hills of Mars.

Some day, perhaps, we shall look on the face  
Of one who dwells within that sister sphere,  
And wonder if his soul has sweeter grace  
Than any soul of ours that sorrows here;

If he has loved, as we may love, in vain;  
If he has striven in cruel coils of hate;  
If loss with him has been the end of gain;  
If he has learned to live—and learned too late.

Yet it may be that this new brother dwells  
In ways more gentle than terrestrial ways,  
That night brings peace to him and haleyon spells,  
That dawns are harbingers of golden days;

And it may be that he is patient, brave,  
Fraternal yet forgiving, strong yet meek,  
And that his world is like the dream we crave,  
Like some utopia we divinely seek.

## HIS DUTY.

BY OCTAVE THANET.

AMOS WICKLIFF little suspected himself riding, that sunny afternoon, towards the ghastliest adventure of an adventurous life. Nevertheless, he was ill at ease. His horse was too light for his big muscles and his six feet two of bone. Being a merciful man to beasts, he could not ride beyond a jog-trot, and his soul was fretted by the delay. He cast a scowl down the dejected neck of the pony to its mournful, mismated ears, and from thence back at his own long legs, which nearly scraped the ground. "Oh Lord! ain't I a mark on this horse!" he groaned. "We could make money in a circus!" With a gurgle of disgust he looked about him at the glaring blue sky, at the measureless, melancholy sweep of purple and dun prairie.

"Well, give me Iowa!" said Amos.

For a long while he rode in silence, but his thoughts were distinct enough for words. "What an amusing little scamp it was!"—thus they ran—"I believe he could mimic anything on earth. He used to give a cat and puppy fighting that I laughed myself nearly into a fit over. When I think of that I hate this job. Now why? You never saw the fellow to speak to him more than twice. Duty, Amos, duty. But if he is as decent as he's got the name of being here, it's rough—Hullo! River? Trees?" The river might be no more than the lightening rim of the horizon behind the foliage, but there was no mistake about the trees; and when Wickliff turned the field-glass, which he habitually carried, on them he could make out not only the river and the willows, but the walls of a cabin and the lovely undulations of a green field of corn. Half an hour's riding brought him to the house and a humble little garden of sweet-pease and hollyhocks. Amos groaned. "How cursed decent it all looks! And flowers, too! I have no doubt that his wife's a nice woman, and the baby has a clean face. Everything certainly does combine to ball me up on this job! There she is; and she's nice!"

A woman in a clean print gown, with a child pulling at her skirt, had run to the gate. She looked young. Her

freckled face was not exactly pretty, but there was something engaging in the flash of her white teeth and her soft, black-lashed, dark eyes. She held the gate wide open, with the hospitality of the West. "Won't you 'light, stranger?" she called.

"I'm bound for here," replied Amos, telling his prepared tale glibly. "This is Mr. Brown's, the photographer's, ain't it? I want him to come to the settlement with me and take me standing on a deer."

"Yes, sir." The woman spoke in mellow Southern accents, and she began to look interested, as suspecting a romance under this vainglory. "Yes, sir. Deer you shot, I reckon. I'll send Johnny D. for him. Oh, Johnny D.!"

A lath of a boy of ten, with sunburnt white hair and bright eyes, vaulted over a fence and ran to her, receiving her directions to go find uncle after he had cared for the gentleman's horse.

"Your nephew, madam?" said Amos, as the lad's bare soles twinkled in the air.

"Well, no, sir, not born nephew," she said, smiling; "he's a little neighbor boy. His folks live three miles further down the river; but I reckon we all think jest as much of him as if he was our born kin. Won't you come in, sir?"

By this time she had passed under the luxuriant arbor of honeysuckle that shaded the porch, and she threw wide the door. The room was large. It was very tidy. The furniture was of the sort that can be easily transported where railways have to be pieced out with mule trails. But it was hardly the ordinary pioneer cabin. Not because there was a sewing-machine in one corner, for the sewing-machine follows hard on the heels of the plough; perhaps because of the white curtains at the two windows (curtains darned and worn thin by washing, tied back with ribbons faded by the same ministry of neatness), or the square of pretty though cheap carpet on the floor, or the magazines and the bunch of sweet-pease on the table, but most because of the multitude of photographs on the clumsy walls. They were on cards, all of the same size