

STORIETTES

ON THE EVE OF HER SURRENDER.

"I'm glad he's coming, of course, but I'm not in love with him," she said, and went around with a demure face and her heart singing like a thrush—possibly for the weather's sake.

"He'll arrive about tea time, Muggy," she told the little dog on the steps. "Suppose we put some flowers in his room? You know we always do that for company." So she slaughtered all the sweet peas that were to come, that the ones that were there might wear long stems in the white jar; and she snipped off the blossoming twigs of the little peach tree, which had planned a fruit offering later and shook its leaves at her reproachfully; and she gathered the last of the poppies, which were to have made the seeds for next year.

"I don't care for him, but I want it to look pleasant," she said over her heaping armful.

When the flowers were in place, she went to her own room and took out three dresses, which she laid side by side on the bed; a lavender and a rose colored and a blue and white. And she looked at them earnestly, and held the bodices up against her face before the mirror.

"There is no use looking like a fright even if I don't care for him," she said; and she finally chose the lavender. The late sun came into the room and made golden patches on the wall, and she put her hands against them and laughed.

"Life is so good, life is so good," she sang to herself. Then she coiled up her hair and frowned at it and pulled it down; and frowned harder over the next twisting, with an angry little jerk of her bare shoulder. And it must all come down and go up once more. This time she was smiling again.

"I wonder how it would feel to really care," she said, and drew a photograph out from under her handkerchiefs. "He is very good looking, but I'm not in the least in love with him," and she put the photograph back with a sigh, then finished her dressing, singing.

When she had given the last little pull and push to her ribbons, and put on her hat, then decided not to wear it, then taken it out again and pinned it in place, she strolled down to the gate and made friends with a country baby that chanced to be playing in the dirt outside.

"I'm expecting company, baby. Will you give me a kiss?" she said. Then she saw some one coming through the bronze shadows of the live oaks, and she flew to her own room and shut the door and stood watching it with her hands clenched against the front of her gown.

"We live so quietly, the idea of company makes me nervous," she said. "I wish he weren't coming. It would be different if I cared for him. I wonder if the blue and white wouldn't have looked better?"

She went to the glass and gave various little tugs at her hair. The click of the gate came to her through the open window. She went quietly down the stairs and out to meet him.

"Why, it's very good to see you again," she said. "Don't let Muggy jump on you. Did you have a warm trip?" His face felt a little, though he answered her gaily.

When she had blown out her candle that night, and the spark was quite dead, she leaned over and put a little kiss on the other pillow.

"I'm not in the least in love with him; but he's a dear boy," she said.

Juliet Wilbor Tompkins.

MICHAEL OBERSTEIN, JEW.

MICHAEL OBERSTEIN was a Jew—what many consider the worst kind of a Jew: a Polish Jew, a Polack. In addition, he was poor—miserably so. It had taken his last copeck to pay for the temporary loan of the amount which it was necessary he should have to pass the Emigration Bureau inspectors.

With a ragged, dirty, wide eyed crowd of his compatriots the young lad was herded, shuffling, with pack on back, up Broadway, over east to Hester Street, where he disappeared through the narrow, greasy doorway of a tenement.

A year—a nightmare of sweat shops, semi starvation, intense heat, biting cold, bondage, oppression, pauper wages, expatriation, loneliness, and—bitter mockery—love. He bore it as the race alone can bear. He toiled and studied as only a Jew studies and toils. He saved money.

Another year of the same nightmare, the same in all its horrors, lightened only by a ghostly glimmer of hope, made as naught by love. She was far above him—a rabbi's daughter. It was a mole aspiring to a butterfly. But the mole was a Jew.

Rosie knew nothing of his love, or, if

she guessed at it, scorned it as it was but right and natural that a butterfly should scorn a mole.

One day the colony was scandalized, horrified. Bearded men discussed it with portentous, ominous shakes of their heads; shawled women with shrill, sharp voices and despicable words. One among them all said nothing: Michael Oberstein.

The rabbi's daughter had run away. That was bad enough. There was worse. The man was a gentile, a Christian. His name was Henry Fanwood, of the firm of Fanwood & Co., where Rosie had been employed as a cloak model.

The rabbi's lamentations were many and long over this crowning disgrace. He tore his beard and cast ashes upon his head. No one thought of Michael Oberstein.

Another year passed. Michael Oberstein began to make nightly, secret visits to a tenement in, if it were possible, a still more miserable district than the one in which he lived. He never went up stairs in the house. He knocked at a door on the first floor; an old woman opened it, he handed her something, spoke a few words in Yiddish, and went back to his own ant hill. Only now he worked harder, slept less.

One day Michael Oberstein disappeared from the colony, and to the old woman, instead of his visits, came letters. The old woman climbed the long flights of stairs and gave the letters, as she had the things, to a young girl.

In the letters there was no writing, no name. Just a blank sheet of heavy paper and, folded in it, a bill. Sometimes it was one dollar, sometimes two, but more often the smaller amount.

The girl had not known from where the food had come—the bread, meat, fish, and on rare occasions, fruit. She thought she knew who sent the money. Only illness and the needs of her child made her accept it. Any way, it was but right that he should contribute to the child's support. The old woman kept her word. She knew nothing, she said.

The girl grew well again, but the envelopes still came. They now contained an occasional five, and once a ten dollar bill. She spent it all on the child. She would have choked on food purchased by it. The child had a right to it.

So five years passed. In Hester Street Michael Oberstein was forgotten. The girl had forgotten him long before. One day the envelope contained fifty dollars. M. Oberstein, the police court lawyer, had won his first case the day before. The girl, the woman now, laid the bill carefully away. It should be for her boy's education.

She still lived in the same house, still

worked, still refused to spend a cent of the money for her own needs. Her boy should be a rabbi, like his grandfather.

Fanwood & Co. were being sued for breach of contract by one of their employees. The plaintiff's lawyer was a Jew by the name of Oberstein. Fanwood & Co. lost the case. It was a small matter, of little moment to that wealthy firm; but it was a beginning. The pendulum had begun to swing. In the next five years Fanwood & Co. found that they were being sued a number of times. The majority of the cases were small, petty. The majority of the cases went against them. It was annoying. Almost without exception the opposing counsel was a Jew named Oberstein. They began to notice this fact. Fanwood & Co. brought suit against a rival firm. Henry Fanwood sent for Lawyer Oberstein to conduct their case. The lawyer declined. He was already engaged by the other side. The defendants won.

Fanwood & Co. asked lawyer Oberstein to take charge of the next of their now frequent lawsuits. He declined. The Grand Jury indicted several firms for violation of the factory law. Among them was Fanwood & Co. The other firms escaped with light sentences. Fanwood & Co. were heavily fined. The prosecutor was Assistant District Attorney Oberstein.

It was the year 1893. Business throughout the country was bad. The list of failing banks and business firms increased every day. The Nineteenth National Bank held Fanwood & Co.'s note for twenty thousand dollars, due July 1. On July 5 the president of the bank was in consultation with the bank's lawyer, Michael Oberstein. Henry Fanwood asked for an interview with the president, and was referred to the bank's lawyer.

On July 8 suit was brought against Fanwood & Co. for the amount of the note. By mortgaging some real estate Henry Fanwood met the note, and the suit was discontinued.

Henry Fanwood was the owner of various real estate properties throughout the city, most of which were heavily mortgaged. These mortgages became due one after the other during this fateful year. Fanwood, already heavily involved through the firm's interests, was unable to meet them. He asked for extensions, and in each case found that the mortgage had been transferred by the original mortgagee to Michael Oberstein.

He applied to the latter, asking for time in which to settle, and was answered by immediate foreclosure proceedings, the properties being bought in by the mortgagee. Fanwood made several attempts to see the

man who seemed bent on his ruin. Each time Mr. Oberstein was busy and could see no one.

Three fine residence buildings were at last the only real estate remaining to Fanwood. They were held in his wife's name, free of all mortgage or incumbrance. In one of them Fanwood lived. The other two were rented.

One day workmen started to tear down the adjoining buildings on either side. In their places were reared huge, cheap tenements. Fanwood's protests were unheeded. His property materially depreciated in value. The tenants moved away, and the two houses remained empty. Business became worse and worse.

Fanwood was forced to dispose of the three houses at a sacrifice below their original cost. They were purchased by Judge Oberstein. The cheap tenements were torn down and houses in keeping with the neighborhood erected. All this had taken months, and during those months Henry Fanwood aged rapidly, grew thin and careworn.

More notes fell due. Fanwood, by heroic struggles, met them, only to find in each case that they were indorsed on the back by transfers to Michael Oberstein. He began to fear and hate the name. It seemed a pursuing nemesis.

Another note was due. The next morning Fanwood & Co.'s doors were closed, the name added to the long list of failures. The same day Henry Fanwood received a letter which read:

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," so saith the Hebraic law.

The letter was signed with the name of Michael Oberstein.

Fanwood puzzled over this, not knowing how he had ever injured this man. He wrote, asking that it might be explained. In his mail the next morning was an envelope addressed in the same hand, containing a sheet of paper on which was written the single word, "Rosie." Fanwood remembered.

The morning papers of the next day announced the death, by his own hand, of Henry Fanwood, of the late firm of Fanwood & Co. Business troubles were thought to have been the cause of the suicide. That afternoon a man called at the flat where Fanwood's wife and children lived, and said that he had been instructed to take charge of the funeral. All expenses were already paid.

By whom? The man was not at liberty to say.

The funeral was one in full keeping with the dead man's former financial standing.

What was by some considered rather peculiar was the attendance of a young rabbi, from a synagogue in Hester Street; a Jewish priest at the funeral of a gentile stranger! The young rabbi himself thought the request of his patron, Michael Oberstein, which had brought him there, strange and inexplicable. What Michael Oberstein thought about the matter was not known to any but himself.

A few days later Mrs. Fanwood received a letter asking her to call on the legal firm of Donaldson & Adams, to learn of something to her advantage. She was there told that a client of theirs, "an old friend of your husband," desired to pay a long outstanding debt. The amount was twenty thousand dollars, in a check drawn by Donaldson & Adams. No, they were unable to disclose their client's name. For various reasons, which they were not at liberty to explain, he had instructed them that he did not care to have it known.

That night, as he slept, there was a smile on the face of Michael Oberstein. Jew.

J. Frederic Thorne.

THE CLAIMANTS OF THE PURSE.

A WOMAN, walking along a road, found a new purse, filled with coins of gold and silver. She was delighted with the sheen of its silken web and with the luster of the golden clasps, but still more with the wealth which it contained and which she felt was all her own. Freely she spent its contents, and only occasionally did she put back into the purse a penny or a silver piece. After a time the purse was nearly emptied, and in thrusting her fingers deep into the ends to reach the few coins that remained, she would tear the silk. One day she found that she had spent the last coin, and as she held the purse in her dainty hand, she saw that it was ragged and shabby and that the clasps were bent and tarnished. So she flung it into the dust before her and crushed it with her foot as she stepped hurriedly onward.

Another woman, walking in the same road, saw the purse. Dusty and worn and misshapen as it was, an unaccountable fancy led her to pick it up, and, in her imagination, she could see how precious and beautiful it must have been before it had been worn out and thrown away. So she took the purse home with her and worked patiently upon it, straightening and burnishing the bent clasps and darning the rents in the silken web, matching the pattern so nicely that when she had finished one could scarcely see where it had been mended.