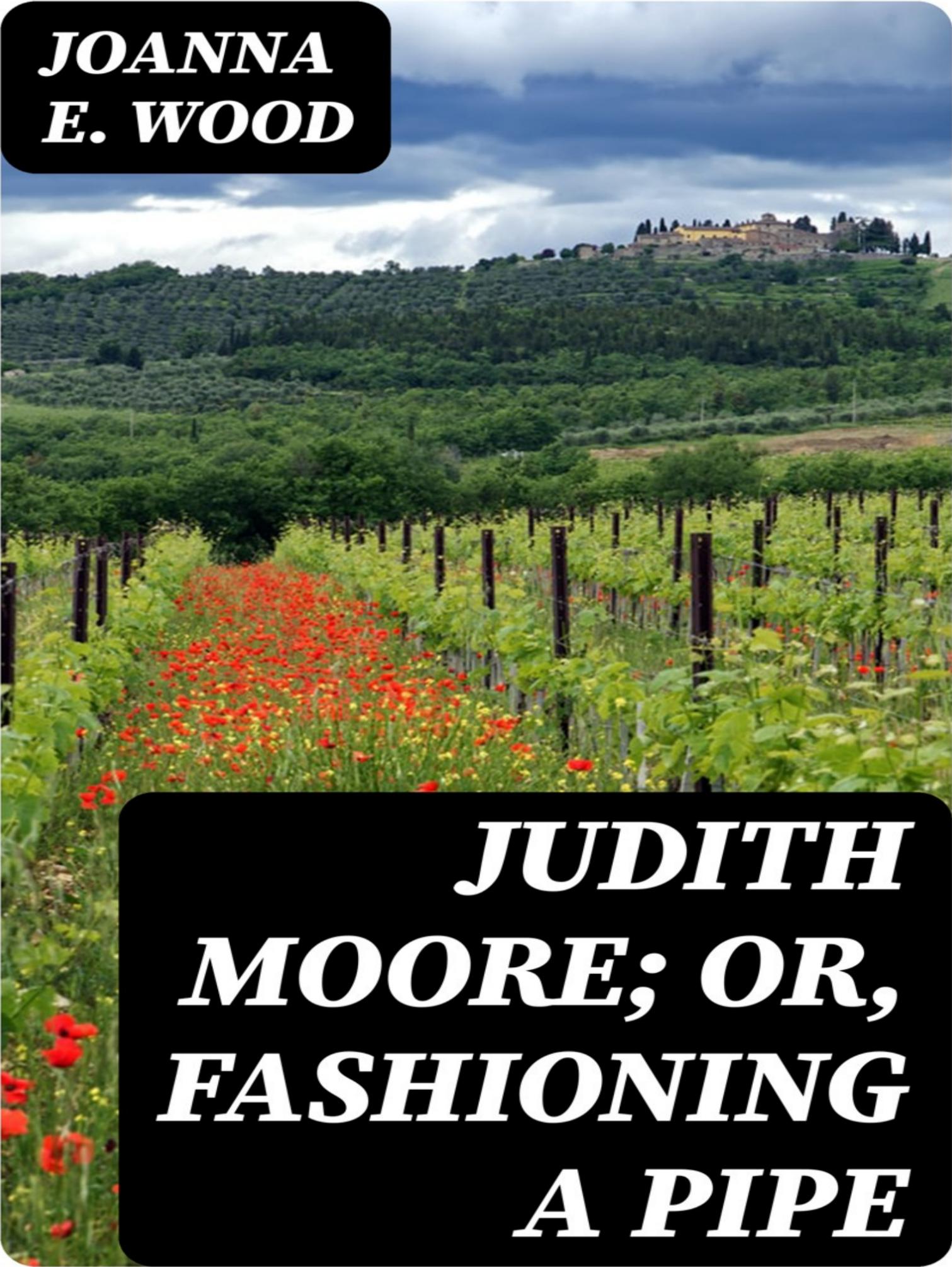


***JOANNA  
E. WOOD***



***JUDITH  
MOORE; OR,  
FASHIONING  
A PIPE***

**Joanna E. Wood**

# **Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe**

EAN 8596547218272

DigiCat, 2022

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# JUDITH MOORE.

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## CHAPTER I.

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"Behold a sower went forth to sow."

Andrew Cutler, with his graceful and melancholy red Irish setter at his heels, walked swiftly across his fields to the "clearing" one morning late in spring.

He was clad in the traditional blue jeans of the countryman, and wore neither coat nor vest; a leathern belt was drawn about his middle. His shirt, open a bit at the throat, and guiltless of collar and tie, displayed a neck such as we see modelled in old bronzes, and of much the same colour; for Andrew Cutler was tanned to the point of being swart. His head had a somewhat backward pose, expressive of an independence almost over-accentuated.

His hair was cropped short, and was of a sun-burnt brown, like his long moustache. His eyes were blue-grey, that softened to hazel or hardened to the hue of steel. His nose was aquiline, with the little flattened plateau on the bridge that we call "Spanish." His chin was strong—the chin of a man who "manlike, would have his way."

Mother Nature must laugh in her sleeve at the descriptive names we tack to her models. This man so

completely satisfied the appellation "aristocratic," that, with the stubbornness of a much-humoured word, it persists in suggesting itself as the best vehicle to describe this young farmer, and indeed the combination would be entirely to the advantage of the adjective, which is often seen in poor company. A veritable rustic Antinous he was, with broad chest, slim, lithe loins, and muscles strong as steel. Slung athwart his shoulder was a sack of coarse brown canvas that bulged with a heavy load; but he strode on, his balance undisturbed, and presently he stood upon the verge of the clearing. This was simply a part of the woodland that Andrew was taking under cultivation. A somewhat unpromising piece it looked, with its stubborn stumps standing irregularly amid the broken furrows—(for it had been ploughed, in such fashion as ploughing may be done when one has to twist around stumps, over stones, and tear through long strong roots).

Andrew remembered the ploughing, as he walked across to begin his sowing, like the good farmer that he was, at the end-rigg. Here was the stump that had resisted gunpowder, leverage and fire, and that now was being tortured by saltpetre, charged in a deep augur hole. Well, it had been a right brave old tree, but the saltpetre would win to the stout oaken heart yet. It was perhaps a step in the right direction, this clearing of the woodland, but all progress seems cruel at first. Here—as he passed over what seemed a particularly smooth bit—the great stone lay hidden that had broken his ploughshare off with a crash, and sent him flying from between the plough-stilts. He would remember that stone

for some time! So doubtless would good old Bess, whose patient brown shoulders had borne the brunt of the shock.

Ploughing a field is like ploughing the sea—one needs must have a chart of each to steer safely. That more formidable sea, "whose waves are years," has no chart. Next winter would see the uprooting of all these stumps, and the felling of more trees beyond. Next spring the plough would pass straight from end to end, and the seed-drill would sow the space which now he was about to sow in the old classic fashion—as they sowed, in intervals of stormy peace, the grain after the wooden ploughs on the Swiss hillsides; as Ulysses sowed the salt upon the seashore; as the sowers sowed the seed in the far-off East, as has been handed down to us in a matchless allegory.

He began his task, hand and foot moving in rhythm, and cadenced by the sharp swish, swish of the grain as it left his hand, spreading fan-wise over the soil. It takes a strong wrist and a peculiar "knack" to sow grain well by hand; he had both.

The dog followed him for a couple of ridges, but, besides the ploughed ground being distasteful to him (for he was a dainty dog and fastidious), the buckwheat hit him in the eyes, and his master paid no heed to him, a combination of circumstances not to be borne; hence, he shortly betook himself to the woodland, where he raised a beautiful little wild rabbit and coursed after it, until with a final kick of its furry heels it landed safe beneath a great pile of black walnut logs, built up criss-cross fashion to mellow for the market. Rufus (named from "William the Red, surnamed Rufus") returned to his master, not dejectedly, but with a

melancholy contempt for rabbits that would not "run it out," but took shelter in a sneaking way where they could not be come at.

By this time Andrew was well on with his work. The sack beneath his arm was growing limp, he himself was warm. He paused as a bird flew up from a turned sod at his feet, and a little search showed the simple nest of a grey-bird—open to the sun and rain, built guilelessly, without defence of strategy or strength.

There is something amiss with the man or woman whose heart is not touched by a bird's nest—the daintiest possible epitome of love, and home, and honest work, and self-sacrificing patience. Andrew had thrashed many a boy for robbing birds' nests, and had discharged a man in the stress of haying because he knocked down the clay nests of the swallows from beneath the granary eaves with a long pole. Now he bent above this nest with curious-tender eyes, touching the spotted eggs lightly whilst the bird, whose breast had left them warm, flitted to and fro upon the furrows. He remained but a moment (the bird's anxiety was cruel) then, fixing the spot in his memory that he might avoid it in the harrowing, he was about to go on his way, when his ears were assailed by a succession of the sweetest sounds he had ever heard—note after note of purest melody, flung forth unsyllabled, full-throated to the air, inarticulate but eloquent. Again and again it came, liquid, rich, and with that pathos which perfection always touches.

At first he could not fix the direction from whence it came. It was as if the heavens above had opened and showered down music upon his heart as he had flung forth

the seed upon the earth: and indeed there were two sowings that morning and from each harvests were garnered—first the bloom and then the fruit thereof. But as he listened longer he knew it issued from the wood before him. At the first note some impulse made him snatch off his old felt hat, and he stood there, bareheaded in the sunshine, as one might stand to whom had come the pang of inspiration.

The singer was voicing no composition, only uttering isolated notes, or short *crescendos*, terminating in notes of exquisite beauty, but leaving a sense of incompleteness that was so intense as to be almost a physical pain to him—only forgotten when the next utterance robbed him of retrospect and filled him with hope. Any one who has heard a perfect singer practising, knows the sensation. In such fashion the unseen sirens sang, and men willingly risked death to touch the lips that had been parted by such melodious breath.

Andrew still stood, and at last silence fell—a silence he hardly comprehended at first, so filled was it with the dream of sound that had passed, so instinct with expectation: but it forced itself upon him, and then suddenly round him there sounded all the commonplace noises of life—the croaking of a tree toad, the buzzing of a chance fly, the far-off shouting of men, and the sounds of birds—all that had been deadened to his ear by the magic of that voice.

A voice—then whence?

In two strides he was over the ploughed ground and in the woods. He searched through and through it in vain. He looked from its borders at his own far-off farm-house among

its trees, at the gables of the village of Ovid clustering together, at the tin on the Baptist Church spire glistening in the midst, at the long low Morris homestead that nestled in a little hollow beyond his wood: but all was as usual, nothing new, nothing strange. No angel's glistening wing was to be seen anywhere.

Andrew's grain was spent, but the clearing was not yet all sown. So he went home leaving his task unfinished. From one thing to another was the rule of his busy life. He gave a cheery word or two to his aunt, Miss Myers, who kept house for him, and then he was off to town with a waggon load of implements to be mended in time for the summer work.

That night a group of typical Ovidians were gathered in the kitchen of old Sam Symmons' house.

Sam Symmons lived in a frame house, just at the foot of the incline which led into the village from the north. Like many of the houses of Ovid, his was distinctly typical of its owner. A new house was such a rare thing in Ovid, that the old ones had time to assimilate the characters of their possessors, and to assume an individuality denied to the factors of a more rapidly growing place.

Old Sam's house was a tumble-down, rakish, brave-looking old house, with shutters erstwhile painted green. They had once given the whole house quite an air, but their painful lapses in the way of broken slats, and uneven or lost hinges, now superimposed upon it a look of indecision. One of the weather-boards at the south corner was loose and, freed from the nails' restraint, bent outward, as though beckoning the gazer in. It was a hospitable old house, but

wary, too, the ornate tin tops of the rain troughs round the roof giving it a knowing look.

The native clematis grew better over the weather-beaten gable than anywhere else in Ovid, and the Provence roses, without any care whatever, bloomed better.

It was as if the house and its environs were making a gallant but losing light against encroaching time and adverse circumstances. So it was with old Sam.

He was an old man. Long before, when Canada's farmers were more than prosperous, when foreign wars kept the price of food grains high, when the soil was virgin and unexhausted, when the military spirit still animated the country, when regulars were in barracks at the nearest town, when every able man was an eager volunteer, when to drink heavily and swear deeply upon all occasions marked the man of ease, when the ladies danced in buckled shoes and *chéne taffetas*, and were worshipped with chivalrous courtesy and high-flown *sobriquets*—in those days old Sam Symmons had been known as "Gallant Sam Symmons," and had been welcomed by many high in the land.

He had ever been first in a fight, the last upright at the table, a gay dancer and a courtly flirt. But now he was glad to get an audience of tolerant villagers to listen to his old tales. For instead of garnering his money he spent it freely, having ever a generous heart and open hand, and of late years he had fallen upon evil times, and gone steadily down hill. Now he had only a strip of barren acres heavily mortgaged. He married late in life the daughter of a country doctor.

They had one child, a girl, whose mother died when she was four years old. Sam christened his daughter Susanna Matilda.

In the days of his youth—oh, the halcyon time—these two names had been the names of the hour. The Mabels, Lilys and Rubys of to-day were yet unborn.

Susanna Waring had been the belle of the county, and her lovers were willing to stake their honour upon her pre-eminence.

Matilda Buchanan had been called "The Rose of Canada," and when the Consul, her father, returned to England, she footed it bravely at the Court of St. James. She married a nobleman there.

They were long dead, these two beauties. Matilda Buchanan had left all her pomp, and Susanna Waring had passed away from all her unhappiness, for she married an officer who treated her brutally. Well, well, old Sam Symmons, gallant Sam Symmons then, had danced with both of them, had kissed Miss Waring's hand in a minuet, and knocked a man down for saying Matilda Buchanan rouged.

She did—they all did in those days—but it was not for the profane lips of man to say so. Thus Sam christened his daughter Susanna Matilda, and felt he had done his duty by her.

After his wife's death, her cousin, a good enough woman in a negative sort of way, kept house for him, and brought up the little girl. When Susanna was eighteen, this woman died; so Sam and his daughter were left alone.

As has been said, quite a crowd was gathered in old Sam's kitchen that night in the last week of May. There was Sam himself, Jack Mackinnon (a neighbour's hired man and the most noted liar in Ovid), Hiram Green, Oscar Randall, and Susanna. It may be said here that throughout Ovid and its environs Susanna's proper name was a dead letter. She was "Sam Symmons' Suse" to all and sundry. The Ovidian mind was not prone to poetry: still, this alliterative name seemed to have charms for it, and perhaps the poetical element in Ovid only required developing: and it may be that the sibilant triune name found favour because it chimed to some dormant vein of poesy, unsuspected even by its possessors.

The occasion calling forth the conclave in Symmons' kitchen was simply that his old mare was very sick; in fact, dying, as all save Sam thought. As every man in Ovid prided himself upon his knowledge of veterinary science, the whole community stirred when it was spread abroad that there was an equine patient to practise upon.

Oscar Randall took the dim lantern from the table and went out. He returned, and all awaited his opinion.

"Well, Os?" said Jack Mackinnon.

"If that was my horse—which she ain't, of course—I'd shoot her," said Oscar, deliberately.

"Shoot her!" said Jack Mackinnon: "shoot her! Don't you do it, Mister Symmons. Why, there was old Mr. Pierson wot I worked for in Essex, he had an old mare, most dreadful old and most terrible sick—sick for months. One day we drawed her out in a field, to die easy and so's she'd be easy to bury. Well, by George! she got up, and old Mr. Pen—him wot I

worked for as has the dairy farm—he came along, and he says to Mr. Pierson, says he, 'Wot'll you take for the mare?' 'Twenty-five dollars,' says the old man. 'She's my mare, then,' says Mr Pen; 'I'll give you my note for her.' So Mr. Pen took her home and drove her in his milk-cart: and that spring he sold her two colts for a hundred dollars apiece, and in the fall he got two hundred dollars for a little black one; and Mr. Ellis, wot keeps tavern, he bought another pair of 'em in winter, and gave a sorrel horse and a double cutter for 'em. I tell you, she was a good old mare that, and we drug her out to die at old Mr. Pierson's, wot I worked for in Essex, and old Mr. Pen, wot keeps the dairy farm, he came along, and says, 'Wot'll you take for the mare?' And—"

"Oh, shut up! Draw it mild, Jack," said Oscar, irascibly.

"Sam," said Hiram Green, slowly, "have you tried Epsom salts? and ginger? and saltpetre? and sweet spirits of nitre? and rye? and asafoetida? and bled her? and given her a bran-mash? and tried turpentine and salt?"

"Yes," said Sam, "I have, and she's no better."

"Now, Sam," said Green, impressively, "did you give her a 'Black's Condition Powder'?"

"No, I didn't," said Sam.

"I thought so," said Green, significantly.

"Do you keep them in the store?" queried Oscar Randall, aggressively. He felt aggrieved with Hiram, having himself intended to ask about the sweet nitre and turpentine.

"Do you keep them?" he asked again.

"Yes, I do," admitted Hiram, "and I've brought one along in case Sam should like to try it."

This rather crushed Oscar's insinuation as to Hiram's business policy in suggesting this remedy, so he sat silent, while old Sam and Hiram Green went out to administer the powder.

Jack Mackinnon, to whom silence was impossible, with the freedom of equality prevalent in Ovid, turned to where Suse sat making rick-rack.

"Wot are you making, Miss Suse?" he began, and without waiting for a reply, continued: "There was Adah Harris, daughter of old man Harris, wot was a carpenter and had a market garden, wot I worked for in Essex, and she was always a-doing things. She was busy every blessed minute, and I tell you she *was* smart; she married Henry Haynes wot kept a blacksmith's shop, wot I worked for: and when I left there, I left my clothes be, till I got a job, and when I went back after 'em, there was a new shirt, and two paper collars in a box, and my mother's picture gone. Now I knowed pretty clost to where them things went—and I'll have 'em back if I have to steal 'em. Why I thought no end of mother's picture, it was took standing; I wouldn't have lost that picture for a fifty-cent piece, and there 'twas gone and my new shirt and two collars I'd only had two months. I left them at Henry Haynes' wot married Adah Harris. Old man Harris went carpentering and kept a market garden, but, pshaw! Talk about squashes, why we growed one squash there took three men to get it into the waggon, and then we rolled it up a board—why squashes—" but just then Hiram and old Sam came in. Old Sam blew the long-lit lantern out.

"Well, father?" Suse asked.

"She's dead," said Sam.

"Dead's a door nail," added Hiram.

"No!" said Jack, with exaggerated incredulity.

"You don't say!" said Oscar, in a tone which betrayed a distinct conflict between self-satisfaction and proper sympathy. He could not resist adding in a lower key, "I seen as much."

Soon the trio of visitors departed. Old Sam was smoking a last pipe when a knock came to the door. He opened it to find Andrew Cutler without.

"What's this I hear about your mare?" he asked. "Is she dead?"

"Yes—couldn't seem to do anything for her," said old Sam, and brave as he was, his tone was somewhat disheartened.

"Well, it's too bad, she was a good beast. Better have my little bay till you look about for another," said Andrew.

Old Sam's face lightened. "I'll be glad to," he answered. "There's the orchard field to plough and I'm behindhand already, but"—his old pride forbidding him to accept too eagerly—"don't you need him?"

"No, not a bit," said Andrew. "Indeed, I'll be glad if you take him awhile. He's getting above himself."

"Well, I'll come along for him in the morning, then," said Sam, relieved. "What have you been doing to-day?"

"Sowing buckwheat in the clearing, and went to town with some mending," replied Andrew. "I'm just getting home."

"How does the clearing look?" asked Sam. "Free of water?"

"Yes, it's in good condition."

"Hiram Green says that there's a boarder up to the Morris place. Did you see anything of it?"

"Man or woman?" asked Andrew, with sudden interest.

"Hiram didn't say. I took it was a man." (Andrew's heart sank.) "Suse, did Hiram Green say 'twas a man or a woman had come to board with old Mrs. Morris?"

"He didn't say," called Suse from an inner room.

"Well, it's a lonely place to choose, isn't it?" said Andrew. "Good-night, Mr. Symmons."

"Good-night, good-night. Thank you kindly," said old Sam.

The old mare was buried next day in one of Sam's barren fields.

"Did you get the shoes off her?" Mr. Horne asked as he encountered old Sam returning from the obsequies with an earthy spade over his rounding shoulders.

"No, I didn't," said Sam.

"Did you save her tail to make a fly brush?" queried Mr. Horne.

"No," answered old Sam. "I never thought of it."

"Did you skin her?" asked his questioner bending over. "Did you skin her?"

"No," said Sam, thoroughly humiliated.

"Well," said Mr. Horne with exuberant sarcasm, as he shook his reins over his team of fat Clydesdales, "It's well you can afford such such waste. I couldn't."

## CHAPTER II.

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"Say where  
In upper air  
Dost hope to find fulfilment of thy dream?  
On what far peak seest thou a morning gleam?  
Why shall the stars still blind thee unaware?  
Why needst thou mount to sing?  
Why seek the sun's fierce-tempered glow and glare?  
Why shall a soulless impulse prompt thy wing?"

The next day Andrew Cutler went to complete the sowing of the clearing. It was somewhat chill, and he wore an old velveteen coat whose ribbed surface was sadly rubbed and faded to a dingy russet. More than that, it was burnt through in several round spots by ashes from his pipes and cigars. As usual, Rufus followed him, and a very picturesque pair the two made.

The air was very clear, the smoke from the village curling bluely up high to the clouds, no shred of it lingering about the roof trees. He could see some white pigeons flying about the church spire; and off to the right, where the river ran, he could see lines of white flashing a moment in the sun, then falling beyond the trees, and these he knew were flashes from the shining breasts and wings of the gulls. The ground had not yet lost the elasticity of spring, and the new grass had not yet quite overcome the dead growth of the year before.

It was a buoyant day, and Andrew was in a buoyant mood. He had not come out without the expectation of hearing more singing, and he promised himself he would not wait so long before beginning his search for the singer, whom he took to be the boarder at the Morris house. However, it seemed as if he was to be disappointed, for the sun grew strong, the air warm, and no music came to him.

His sowing was done, and he was just about leaving, when, sweet, clear, full, the voice of yesterday shook out a few high notes, and then taking up the words of a song began to sing it in such fashion that Andrew (who knew the song well) could hardly believe that the sound issued from mortal lips—it was so flute-like, so liquid.

Now, Andrew's life had not been one of much dissipation; still, there were hours in it he did not care to dwell upon, and the memory of every one of these unworthy hours suddenly smote him with shame. They say that at death's approach one sees in a second all the sins of his soul stand forth in crimson blazonry, and perhaps, in that moment, Andrew's old self died.

The singer's voice had taken up another song, one he did not know—

"Out from yourself!  
For your broken heart's vest;  
For the peace which you crave;  
For the end of your quest;  
For the love which can save;  
Come! Come to me!"