

happy one; "only a servant," yet a good and faithful woman, blessed with the confidence, respect and affection of those who knew her genuine worth.

As a smile broke over Patty's face, Miss Jane said, with an arm round the little blue-gowned figure, —

"What are you dreaming and smiling about, deary? The friends that are to come for you some day, with a fine fortune in their pockets?"

"No, ma'am, I feel as if I'd found my folks, and I don't want any finer fortune than the love they've given me to-day. I'm trying to think how I can deserve it, and smiling because it's so beautiful and I'm so happy," answered Patty, looking up at her first friend with full eyes and a glad, grateful glance that made her lovely.

X.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN
OMNIBUS.

I WAS born in Springfield, — excuse me if I don't mention how many years ago, for my memory is a little treacherous on some points, and it does not matter in the least. I was a gay young 'bus, with a long, red body, yellow wheels, and a picture of Washington on each side. Beautiful portraits, I assure you, with powdered hair, massive nose, and a cataract of shirt-frill inundating his buff vest. His coat and eyes were wonderfully blue, and he stared at the world in general with superb dignity, no matter how much mud might temporarily obscure his noble countenance.

Yes, I was an omnibus to be proud of; for my yellow wheels rumbled sonorously as they rolled my cushions were soft, my springs elastic, and my varnish shone with a brilliancy which caused the human eye to wink as it regarded me.

Joe Quimby first mounted my lofty perch, four

fine gray horses drew me from obscurity, and Bill Buffum hung gayly on behind as conductor; for in my early days there were no straps to jerk, and passengers did not plunge in and out in the undignified way they do now.

How well I remember my first trip, one bright spring day! I was to run between Roxbury and Boston, and we set out in great style, and an admiring crowd to see us off. That was the beginning of a long and varied career, — a useful one too, I hope; for never did an omnibus desire to do its duty more sincerely than I did. My heart yearned over every one whom I saw plodding along in the dust; my door opened hospitably to rich and poor, and no hand beckoned to me in vain. Can every one say as much?

For years I trundled to and fro punctually at my appointed hours, and many curious things I saw — many interesting people I carried. Of course, I had my favorites, and though I did my duty faithfully to all, there were certain persons whom I loved to carry, whom I watched for and received into my capacious bosom with delight.

Several portly old gentlemen rode down to their business every day for years, and I felt myself hon-

ored by such eminently respectable passengers. Nice, motherly women, with little baskets, daily went to market; for in earlier days housewives attended to these matters and were notable managers. Gay young fellows would come swarming up beside Joe, and crack jokes all the way into town, amusing me immensely.

But my especial pets were the young girls, — for we had girls then, — blithe, bonny creatures, with health on their cheeks, modesty in their bright eyes, and the indescribable charm of real maidenliness about them. So simply dressed, so quiet in manner, so unconscious of display, and so full of innocent gayety, that the crustiest passenger could not help softening as they came in. Bless their dear hearts! what would they say if they could see the little fashion-plates school-girls are now? The seven-story hats with jet daggers, steel arrows, and gilt horse-shoes on the sides, peacocks' tails in front, and quantities of impossible flowers tumbling off behind. The jewelry, the frills and bows, the frizzled hair and high-heeled boots, and, worst of all, the pale faces, tired eyes, and ungirlish manners.

Well, well, I must not scold the poor dears, for they are only what the times make them, — fast and

loud, frivolous and feeble. All are not spoilt, thank heaven; for now and then, a fresh, modest face goes by, and then one sees how lovely girlhood may be.

I saw many little romances, and some small tragedies, in my early days, and learned to take such interest in human beings, that I have never been able to become a mere machine.

When one of my worthy old gentlemen dropped away, and I saw him no more, I mourned for him like a friend. When one of my housewifely women came in with a black bonnet on, and no little lad or lass clinging to her hand, I creaked my sympathy for her loss, and tried not to jolt the poor mother whose heart was so heavy. When one of my pretty girls entered, blushing and smiling, with a lover close behind, I was as pleased and proud as if she had been my own, and every black button that studded my red cushion twinkled with satisfaction.

I had many warm friends among the boys who were allowed to "hang on behind," for I never gave a dangerous lurch when they were there, and never pinched their fingers in the door. No, I gave a jolly rumble when the steps were full; and I kept

the father of his country beaming so benignly at them that they learned to love his old face, to watch for it, and to cheer it as we went by.

I was a patriotic 'bus; so you may imagine my feelings when, after years of faithful service on that route, I was taken off and sent to the paint-shop, where a simpering damsel, with lilies in her hair, replaced G. Washington's honored countenance. I was re-christened "The Naiad Queen," which disgusted me extremely, and kept to carry picnic parties to a certain lake.

Earlier in my life I should have enjoyed the fun; but I was now a middle-aged 'bus, and felt as if I wanted more serious work to do. However, I resigned myself and soon found that the change did me good; for in the city I was in danger of getting grimy with mud, battered with banging over stones, and used up with the late hours, noise and excitement of town life.

Now I found great refreshment in carrying loads of gay young people into the country for a day of sunshine, green grass, and healthful pleasure. What jolly parties they were, to be sure! Such laughing and singing, feasting and frolicking; such baskets of flowers and fresh boughs as they carried home.

and, better still, such blooming cheeks, happy eyes, and hearts bubbling over with the innocent gayety of youth! They soon seemed as fond of me as I was of them, for they welcomed me with shouts when I came, played games and had banquets inside of me when sun or rain made shelter pleasant, trimmed me up with wreaths as we went home in triumph, and gave three rousing cheers for the old 'bus when we parted. That was a happy time, and it furnished many a pleasant memory for duller days.

After several seasons of picnicking, I was taken to an asylum for the deaf, dumb, and blind, and daily took a dozen or so out for an airing. You can easily imagine this was a great contrast to my last place; for now, instead of rollicking parties of boys and girls, I took a sad load of affliction; and it grieved me much to know that while some of the poor little creatures could see nothing of the beauty round them, the others could hear none of the sweet summer sounds, and had no power to express their happiness in blithe laughter or the gay chatter one so loves to hear.

But it did me good; for, seeing them so patient with their great troubles, I was ashamed to grumble about my small ones. I was now getting to be an

elderly 'bus, with twinges of rheumatism in my axletrees, many cracks like wrinkles on my once smooth paint, and an asthmatic creak to the hinges of the door that used to swing so smartly to and fro. Yes, I was evidently getting old, for I began to think over my past, to recall the many passengers I had carried, the crusty or jolly coachmen I had known, the various horses who had tugged me over stony streets or dusty roads, and the narrow escapes I had had in the course of my career.

Presently I found plenty of time for such reminiscences, for I was put away in an old stable and left there undisturbed a long, long time. At first, I enjoyed the rest and quiet; but I was of a social turn, and soon longed for the stirring life I had left. I had no friends but a few gray hens, who roosted on my pole, laid eggs in the musty straw on my floor, and came hopping gravely down my steps with important "cut, cut, ka da cuts!" when their duty was done. I respected these worthy fowls, and had many a gossip with them; but their views were very limited, and I soon tired of their domestic chat.

Chanticleer was coachman now, as in the days of Partlet and the nuts; but he never drove out,

only flew up to my roof when he crowed, and sat there, in his black and yellow suit, like a diligence-driver sounding his horn. Interesting broods of chickens were hatched inside, and took their first look at life from my dingy windows. I felt a grand fatherly fondness for the downy things, and liked to have them chirping and scratching about me, taking small flights from my steps, and giving funny little crows in imitation of their splendid papa.

Sundry cats called often, for rats and mice haunted the stable, and these gray-coated huntsmen had many an exciting chase among my moth-eaten cushions, over the lofts, and round the grain-bags.

"Here I shall end my days," I thought, and resigned myself to obscurity. But I was mistaken; for just as I was falling out of one long doze into another, a terrible commotion among the cats, hens, and mice woke me up, and I found myself trundling off to the paint-shop again.

I emerged from that fragrant place in a new scarlet coat, trimmed with black and ornamented with a startling picture of a salmon-colored Mazeppa, airily dressed in chains and a blue sheet, hanging by one foot to the back of a coal-black steed with red nostrils and a tempestuous tail. who was wildly

careering over a range of pea-green mountains on four impossible legs. It was much admired; but I preferred George Washington, like the loyal 'bus that I am.

I found I was to live in the suburbs and carry people to and from the station of a new railway, which, with the town, seemed to have sprung up like mushrooms. Well, I bumped passengers about the half-finished streets; but I did not like it, for every thing had changed much during my retirement. Everybody seemed in a tearing hurry now,—the men to be rich, the women to be fine; the boys and girls couldn't wait to grow up, but flirted before they were in their teens; and the very babies scrambled out of their cradles as if each was bent on toddling farther and faster than its neighbor. My old head quite spun round at the whirl every thing was in, and my old wheels knew no rest, for the new coachman drove like Jehu.

It is my private opinion that I should soon have fallen to pieces if a grand smash had not settled the matter for me. A gay young fellow undertook to drive, one dark night, and upset his load in a ditch, fortunately breaking no bones but mine. So I was sent to a carriage factory for repairs; but, appar-

ently, my injuries were past cure, for I was left on a bit of waste land behind the factory, to go to ruin at leisure.

"This is the end of all things," I said, with a sigh, as year after year went by and I stood there alone, covered with wintry snow or blistered by summer sunshine. But how mistaken I was! for just when all seemed most sad and solitary, the happiest experience of my life came to me, and all the world was brightened for me by the coming of my dearest friends.

One chilly spring night, when rain was falling, and the wind sighed dismally over the flats, I was waked from a nap by voices and the rustling of straw inside my still strong body.

"Some tramp," I thought, with a yawn, for I had often taken lodgers for a night, rent free. But the sounds I now heard were the voices of children, and I listened with interest to the little creatures chirping and nestling in there like the chickens I told you of.

"It's as nice as a house, Hans, and so warm I'll soon be dry," said one of the homeless birds who had taken shelter in my bosom.

"It's nicer than a house, Gretchen, because we

can push it about if we like. I wish we could stay here always; I'm so tired of the streets," sighed another young voice.

"And I'm so hungry; I do wish mother would come," cried a very tired baby voice, with a sob.

"Hush, go to sleep, my Lina! I'll wake you if mother brings us bread, and if not you will feel no disappointment, dear."

Then the elder sister seemed to wrap the little one close, and out of my bosom came a soft lullaby, as one child gave the other all she had, — love and care.

"In the shed yonder I saw a piece of carpet; I shall go and bring it to cover us, then you will not shiver so, dear Gretchen," said the boy; and out into the rainy darkness he went, whistling to keep his spirits up and hide his hunger.

Soon he came hurrying back with the rude coverlet, and another voice was heard, saying, in the tone that only mothers use, —

"Here is supper, dear children. Eat all; I have no wish for any more. People were very good to me, and there is enough for every one."

Then, with cries of joy, the hungry birds were fed, the motherly wings folded over them, and all seemed to sleep in the poor nest they had found.

All night the rain pattered on my old roof, but not a drop went through; all night the chilly wind crept round my windows, and breathed in at every broken pane, but the old carpet kept the sleepers warm, and weariness was a sure lullaby. How pleased and proud I felt that I could still be useful, and how eagerly I waited for day to see yet more of my new tenants! I knew they would go soon and leave me to my loneliness, so I longed to see and hear all I could.

The first words the mother said, as she sat upon the step in the warm April sun, pleased me immensely, for they were of me.

"Yes, Hans, it will be well to stay here a day at least, if we may, for Lina is worn out and poor Gretchen so tired she can go no more. You shall guard them while they sleep, and I will go again for food, and may get work. It is better out here in the sun than in some poor place in the city, and I like it well, this friendly old carriage that sheltered us when most we needed it."

So the poor woman trudged away, like a true mother-bird, to find food for the ever-hungry brood, and Hans, a stout lad of twelve, set about doing his part manfully.

When he heard the workmen stirring in the great factory, he took courage, and, going in, told his sad tale of the little tired sisters sleeping in the old omnibus, the mother seeking work, the father lately dead, and he (the young lad) left to guard and help the family. He asked for nothing but leave to use the bit of carpet, and for any little job whereby he might earn a penny.

The good fellows had fatherly hearts under their rough jackets, and lent a helping hand with the readiness the poor so often show in lightening one another's burdens. Each did what he could; and when the mother came back, she found the children fed and warmed, cheered by kind words and the promise of help.

Ah! it was a happy day for me when the Schmidts came wandering by and found my door ajar! A yet happier one for them, since the workmen and their master befriended the poor souls so well that in a week the houseless family had a home, and work whereby to earn their bread.

They had taken a fancy to me, and I was their home; for they were a hardy set and loved the sun and air. Clever Hans and his mother made me as neat and cosy as possible, stowing away their few

possessions as if on shipboard. The shed was given to mother Schmidt for a wash-house, and a gypsy fire built on the ground, with an old kettle slung over it, in which to boil the clothes she washed for such of the men as had no wives. Hans and Gretchen soon found work selling chips and shavings from the factory, and bringing home the broken food they begged by the way. Baby Lina was a universal pet, and many a sixpence found its way into her little hand from the pockets of the kindly men, who took it out in kisses, or the pretty songs she sang them.

All that summer my family prospered, and I was a happy old 'bus. A proud one, too; for the dear people loved me well, and, in return for the shelter I gave them, they beautified me by all the humble means in their power. Some one gave Gretchen a few scarlet beans, and these she planted among the dandelions and green grass that had grown about my wheels. The gay runners climbed fast, and when they reached the roof, Hans made a trellis of old barrel hoops, over which they spread their broad leaves and bright flowers till Lina had a green little bower up aloft, where she sat, as happy as a queen, with the poor toys which her baby fancy changed to playthings of the loveliest sort.

Mother Schmidt washed and ironed busily all day in her shed, cooked the soup over her gypsy fire, and when the daily work was done sat in the shadow of the old omnibus with her children round her, a grateful and contented woman. If any one asked her what she would do when our bitter winter came, the smile on her placid face grew graver, but did not vanish, as she laid her worn hands together and answered, with simple faith,—

“The good Gott who gave us this home and raised up these friends will not forget us, for He has such as we in His especial charge.”

She was right; for the master of the great factory was a kind man, and something in the honest, hard-working family interested him so much that he could not let them suffer, but took such friendly thought for them that he wrought one of the pleasant miracles which keep a rich man's memory green in grateful hearts, though the world may never know of it.

When autumn came and the pretty bower began to fade, the old omnibus to be cold at night, and the shed too gusty even for the hardy German laundress, a great surprise was planned and gayly carried out. On the master's birthday the men had

a holiday, and bade the Schmidts be ready to take part in the festival, for all the factory people were to have a dinner in one of the long rooms.

A jovial time they had; and when the last bone had been polished off, the last health drunk, and three rousing cheers for the master given with a will, the great joke took place. First the Schmidts were told to go and see what had been left for them in the 'bus, and off they ran, little dreaming what was to come. I knew all about it, and was in a great twitter, for I bore a grand part in it.

The dear unsuspecting family piled in, and were so busy having raptures over certain bundles of warm clothes found there that they did not mind what went on without. A dozen of the stoutest men quietly harnessed themselves to the rope fastened to my pole, and at a signal trotted away with me at a great pace, while the rest, with their wives and children, came laughing and shouting after.

Imagine the amazement of the good Schmidts at this sudden start, their emotions during that triumphal progress, and their unspeakable surprise and joy when their carriage stopped at the door of a tidy little house in a lane not far away, and they

were handed out to find the master waiting to welcome them home.

Dear heart, how beautiful it all was! I cannot describe it, but I would not have missed it for the world, because it was one of the scenes that do everybody so much good and leave such a pleasant memory behind.

That was my last trip, for the joyful agitation of that day was too much for me, and no sooner was I safely landed in the field behind the little house than one of my old wheels fell all to pieces, and I should have tumbled over, like a decrepit old creature, if the men had not propped me up. But I did not care; my travelling days were past, and I was quite content to stand there under the apple-trees, watching my family safe and busy in their new home.

I was not forgotten, I assure you; for Germans have much sentiment, and they still loved the old omnibus that sheltered them when most forlorn. Even when Hans was a worker in the factory he found time to mend me up and keep me tidy; pretty Gretchen, in spite of much help given to the hard-working mother, never forgot to plant some common flower to beautify and cheer her old friend;

and little Lina, bless her heart! made me her baby-house. She played there day after day, a tiny matron, with her dolls, her kitten and her bits of furniture, as happy a child as ever sang "Bye-low" to a dirty-faced rag-darling. She is my greatest comfort and delight; and the proudest moment of my life was when Hans painted her little name on my door and gave me to her for her own.

Here my story ends; for nothing now remains to me but to crumble slowly to ruin and go where the good 'busses go; very slowly, I am sure, for my little mistress takes great care of me, and I shall never suffer from rough usage any more. I am quite happy and contented as I stand here under the trees that scatter their white petals on my rusty roof each spring; and well I may be, for after my busy life I am at rest; the sun shines kindly on me, the grass grows greenly round me, good friends cherish me in my old age, and a little child nestles in my heart, keeping it tender to the last.

XI.

RED TULIPS.

"PLEASE, ma'am, will you give me one of them red tulips?"

The eager voice woke Helen from her reverie, and, looking up, she saw a little colored girl holding on to the iron railing with one hand, while the other pointed to a bed of splendid red and yellow tulips waving in the sunshine.

"I can't give you one, child, for they don't belong to me," answered Helen, arrested by the wistful face, over which her words brought a shadow of disappointment.

"I thought maybe you lived in this house, or knew the folks, and I *do* want one of them flowers dreadful bad," said the girl, regarding the gay tulips with a look of intense desire.

"I wish I *could* give you one, but it would be stealing, you know. Perhaps if you go and ask, the owner may let you have one, there are so many."

And having offered all the consolation in her