

J. P. DAVIS - SCULPTOR - N. Y.

A FOGGY DAY ON THE BRONX. S. R. GIFFORD.

15

# OUT OF TOWN

A RURAL EPISODE

By BARRY GRAY

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

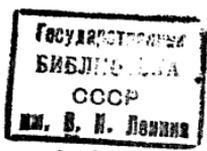


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## PREFATORY AND DEDICATORY.



“Do you know, Mr. Gray,” asked my estimable wife early one morning, as she raised the sash and threw open the blinds of the chamber-window, in our house in Merryfield Place, “that the spring is here? Observe how balmy is the air, and see how the buds are swelling on the trees, and the grass sending forth its green blades in the courtyard. Listen to the song of that bluebird, perched upon the swaying branch of the elm, and hearken, too, to the buzzing of the early flies, enjoying the warm sunshine on the window panes. Yes, the spring is here, my dear, and we are on the verge, as the poet hath it, of the ‘delicate-footed May’; and this reminds me — oh! sad anticlimax — that you have not yet obtained a house for the coming year, and that, before ten days go by, unless you do, we shall be homeless, having neither a shelter for, nor a place wherein to lay, our heads.”

“I am fully aware of it, my dear,” I replied; “and I have for the last month, as you are aware, travelled over the greater part of the city searching for a proper residence, without finding one. I have half-decided to look no further” —

“That would be just like you, Mr. Gray,” interrupted my wife; “you would be willing to sit down quietly, with folded hands, and let the future take care of itself.”

“You are very much mistaken, my dear,” I said, “if you think so. What I was going to say was, that I was half-decided to look no further for a house in the city; but to get one out of town. And, if it will please you, I will do so.”

My wife having expressed a decided approbation of this plan, I continued: “Your quotation, my dear, from the poet is so suggestive of the country that I wish we were there at this moment. The phrase, ‘delicate-footed May,’ is especially good to employ if one lives in the country, or even if he be a loungeur among the city parks, and is given to frequenting that Park of parks, the Central. But if he be condemned, as most of our people are, to the purloins of brick and mortar, and only sees the parks as he rides by in the over-crowded car, or the not less crowded omnibus, it is not so appropriate. For May, in most cases, then means ‘moving time,’ when the year’s Lares and Penates are torn up by the roots, and the household gods are borne from place to place, and, in the midst of much dirt, confusion, and anxiety, planted afresh in some new locality to be again transferred when the next ‘delicate-footed May’ comes round. The approaching May promises to be unusually fraught with annoyance. Houses to be let are remarkably rare, even at greatly advanced prices, and many a family will find itself, on the first of May, without a sheltering roof.”

“That is so,” said my wife, “and it would not surprise me if we should be among the number.”

“Persons,” I continued, not heeding Mrs. Gray’s interruption, “who heretofore thought they could not live out of town, will find it not only cheaper, but healthier and pleasanter, to have a house in the country; and, before