

Selected Poetry and Story.

LOVE'S CALENDAR.

BY E. WESBITT.

A young year's freshness in the air,
A spring-tide color to the wood;
The flowers in spring-time meet are fair,
And life in spring-time most is good—
For why?—I will not let you hear
Until the summer is a-near.

A summer all of burning lights,
With crimson roses, passion-red,
And moonlight for the hot white nights,
And jasmine bowers, sweet, dew-fod,
Why has each rose a double scent?
You may divine when it is spent.

Autumn with shining yellow sheaves,
And garnered fruit; and half regret
To watch the dreary falling leaves
And leaden skies above them set;
And why 'e'en autumn can seem dear
Perchance you'll guess, when winter's
here.

Winter, in wide snow-covered plains,
And drifting sleet, and piercing wind,
That chills the blood within your veins,
But our warm hearts can never find—
Ah, little love, you guess, I know,
What warms our heart in spite of snow.

A MOTHER'S STORY.

BY ESTHER BERLE KENNETH.

As often heard it said that people are happiest when they are young. I don't know about that. My young days were not especially happy; they were full of deprivations, and I had no one to love. And I didn't marry very happily, or well either. My husband proved ill-tempered and exacting, blighting the affection I would gladly have bestowed upon him. He had been my father's choice, not mine; yet I did not know him for what he was until after I was married. I bore several children, who died, and this was a great grief to me. Yet I never thought to sum up my lot and make moan over it. My material wants were supplied, and I had some pleasure; and when at last a rosy, healthy little one was laid in my arms, I began to enjoy my life. But by this time I was thirty years old.

Well my parents died, and then my husband, and Rob and I were left alone. He was five years old when his father died. From that time for twenty years, we lived solely for each other—Rob and I. My father, though he had ever been very severe with me, neglecting to provide comfortably or educate me, yet left me considerable property in the city. If he had not come honestly by it, I could not help it. And Rob's father left him all the Desmond income; so we were not only well off, I suppose we were rich.

We had finally settled down in one of the houses belonging to Rob. It was called "Mapleton's Pet," because it was a wonderfully beautiful estate, which a rich man had spent much money on, with a view to making it quite perfect. Finally, in an unfortunate speculation, he was obliged to sell it, and my husband had come in possession.

Mapleton's Pet was in the city, but you would hardly have known it, its lawns and gardens were so spacious, and its hedges and fine walls so shut it away from the dust and din. It was certainly a model house, with its nice housekeeping arrangements, and its lovely octagon rooms, with long windows, and landscape panels painted by great artists. Withal it was small, and therefore cosy for Rob and I.

Yes, it was beautifully homelike and pleasant. It seemed at last that I had

lived there all my life—we are so much more alive when we are enjoying ourselves. My youth grew like a dim dream. Rob was ever the dearest boy! He cared for little that he could not share with his mother. We worked, played, and studied together—for he must needs tell me all he learned, day by day, and so with reading the books he bought for me, I got a smattering of many things I had hitherto known nothing of. He went to college, yet still lived at home, as Mapleton's Pet was but a mile from the college grounds. Then he read with a great lawyer, and by and by was qualified for practice; and as Rob was faithful at everything, and talented, he was soon very successful and rose rapidly.

Still we kept mainly to our quiet home life. He entertained a few friends sometimes, and I must needs sit at the head of the table; and sometimes he spent an evening away from home; but though he was familiar with many persons I did not know, none of them ever wooed him from his mother.

But Rob had passed his twenty-fifth birthday now, and I knew he would be thinking of marrying. Nor did I want him to be an old bachelor. Dear companions as we had ever been, I knew that my life was almost spent, while his was just begun, and the time must soon come when I must leave him. I wanted him, therefore, to have a good wife, and to hold his little ones on my knees. I said to myself that I would have no mean jealousy of Rob's wife, but in the same breath I affirmed that I knew no one in the world half good enough for him.

One day, when my beautiful roses were in their fullest bloom, all pink and fragrant, I was called to the door to see a young lady, who asked if I would like to send some roses to the Children's Hospital.

That was the first time I saw Beatrix Rane. She was a very beautiful young lady, and her rich dress clung about her, confirming the impression her manners gave, that she was one who had ever lain among the roses, and fed on the lilies of life. I was much pleased with her appearance, and urged her to come in a moment, and tell me about the children in whom she appeared so interested. As for the roses, I promised to give her as many as she could carry away every day while they lasted.

The next day when she called, I went to the hospital with her, carrying a jar of jelly, and some of my own ripe fruit—strawberries and peaches; and as I soon got into the habit of going about among the poor, I met Beatrix Rane very often.

In a little while I loved the girl. She had the sweetest temper, the most generous heart, the warmest ways I ever knew. How the children loved her! She was not only kind—she was right down joyous and merry with them, poor little things! The doctors said she was worth a ton of drugs for sick children. It was not strange my heart was won, she was a delight to everybody. Because she made me think of the velvety pansies in my garden, with her patrician face and rich dress, I gave her the old-fashioned name of the flower, and called her Lady Delight.

I told Rob about her. I wanted him to see her. I told him how she was one of many children belonging to a wealthy family, but there was not one of them like her. The rest were proud and selfish, while Lady Delight was as simple and gracious as a very queen. She was certainly one of a thousand. But Rob did not seem much interested. I was piqued, because I thought that at last I had found some one fit for Rob's wife.

Yes, I would have been happy to have had Rob marry Lady Delight, and to have had her all my life at Mapleton's Pet. To be sure she was beautiful, wealthy, and high-born; but my Rob was as hand-

some, and every inch a gentleman, and no one would dispute that he was quite her peer.

But Rob and Lady Delight never met in those days. I didn't know exactly how it was, but he never took any pains to do so. If she came to dine with me, he was sure to be called out of town. If she spent an evening at our house, he had an engagement down town. It seemed always to happen so. My match-making plan didn't prosper at all; for though I showed Lady Delight Rob's photograph, and praised him to the skies, as he deserved, she didn't seem a bit curious, and always had the carriage come for her before he came home.

But I was still hoping the matter would come right sometime, and loving my Lady D-light more and more every day, when Rob showed a change. He was more than usually kind and tender of his mother, and I told him so.

"Darling mother," he said gently, "I have something to tell you which I fear will give you pain, and you have ever been so dear to me, that I cannot bear the thought of hurting your tender heart."

"Dear Rob, what is it?"

"Mother, I am going to be married."

Well, a feather might have knocked me down then. I grew so weak. A strange woman to come into our home, and take my boy from me!

"She is good, mother," said Rob. "She knows all that my mother has been to me, and she will love you. And you will not lose your son—you will gain a daughter."

I listened, forcing a smile to my face. I told Rob I hoped all would be well, and that I was glad he was so happy, for he was as happy as a king. But as soon as I could I crept away to my chamber, like some poor, wounded wild creature, that had received its death blow, and moaned all night.

Rob was going to be married right off the next week, at his bride's house—at his bride's house. And he was so busy fitting up their chamber, and adding to the parlors and library, to gratify her taste, that we spoke little together on the subject afterwards.

I was really sick on my son's wedding day. Grief and sleeplessness had brooded on a racking pain in my head, which quite prostrated me. Rob would have postponed his marriage, so disappointed was he; but I said:

"No, no! I can welcome her here, Rob, and I shall not be missed there."

He looked so handsome in his fresh dress—he was so blithe and gay, how could I reveal to him what I felt? I wept loud and bitterly when the door closed after him, and my boy had gone to give himself to another woman; but I knew that his future happiness was still much controlled by me, and at last I wiped away my tears, and prayed they might be the last I should ever shed.

I went slowly through the rooms, noting carefully how fresh and beautiful Rob had made them. I ascended to my chamber, and pulled open a drawer containing little yellow, worn, baby garments—my boy's first. I kissed them.

"For your sake, Rob, I will try to act a mother's part by this girl whom you have chosen."

Then I went down and ordered an exquisite evening meal, for Rob was to bring his wife directly home.

Just at dusk the bell rang. I looked from the window, saw the carriage, and hastened down before the servant could reach the door.

He was handing her up the steps—a girl in pearl-coloured velvet and ermine, with a cool white face, and great velvety, dark eyes.

"My wife, mother," said Rob. "But this—this," I screamed, "is my Lady Delight!"

"Exactly. Beatrix was wise enough to win your love before you could have any prejudice against her, darling mother, or be jealous of that other woman. Else she would never have come here as your son's wife."

Now you know why I am happy in these, my last days, happy as the days are long!

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