

## TO ETHEL.

(Who wishes had lived—

*"In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn."**"In teacup-times!" The style of dress  
Would suit your beauty. I confess;  
Belinda-like, the patch you'd wear;  
I picture you with powdered hair—  
You'd make a charming Shepherdess!**And I—no doubt—could well express  
Sir Plume's complete conceitedness—  
Could poise a clouded cane with care  
"In teacup-times!"**The parts would fit precisely—yes:  
We should achieve a huge success;  
You should disdain, and I despair,  
With quite a true Augustan air;  
But . . . could I love you more, or less,  
"In teacup-times!"*

AUSTIN DOBSON.

## BETWEEN LOVE AND DUTY.

In the year 1832, a millionaire named Sydney Harpagon died, leaving the whole of his property to his nephew, Carttar Bessbroughton, and to the detriment of Ishmael Petreer, another nephew.

These two nephews were the only blood relations the man had.

The cousins had unwisely struggled each for the whole of the fortune.

One obtained all, the other nothing.

The old man dying, the conditions of the will could not be modified.

Ishmael openly declared that he had been deprived of his birthright by fraud on the part of Carttar.

Carttar could afford to laugh at the accusation, and he did not go beyond laughter.

The careers of the two men were very different.

Carttar married another fortune and a virago.

He had no family, and she died in 1850, after eighteen wrangling years of married life, and when her husband was about forty.

Carttar Bessbroughton married again, and again became a widower, but with this difference—one daughter, called Cythea, consoled his second widowhood.

Our tale practically commences when Cythea was sixteen years of age.

As to the outcast cousin, Ishmael, he went to India, where he married, after many years' unsuccessful struggle with fortune.

His only son, named exactly after himself, was called Ishmael Petreer. He was born about four years before Cythea saw the light.

He was sent to England from India when he was ten. Before he reached twenty, both father and mother were dead, leaving him master of a very moderate fortune, and the inheritor of some expectation on the mother's side, together with a fervid hatred for the old man whose calamity had destroyed his father's life prospects.

When this tale begins, let it be repeated, Cythea was eighteen, her father sixty; while at that time Ishmael numbered twenty-two, or perhaps twenty-three summers, certainly not more.

A determination on the part of aging Carttar Bessbroughton brought about the events in this tale.

## CHAPTER I.

## SOME LOVE AND MORE DUTY.

"AND is it possible that you can look me calmly in the face and tell me that you forego our engagement?"

"Yes."

"But you said you loved me?"

"Ezra," she replied, "I know that I did say that I loved you, and I am sure that when I said so I quite believe that I was devoted to you."

"What has changed your opinion?"

"Did you not promise to refrain from asking me questions?"

"I did; but you sprang a mine upon me.

When you requested that I should ask you no questions upon what you were going to say to me, when I laughingly said 'Yes' how was I to guess, or come near guessing, that you were about to withdraw your promise to marry me?"

"Nevertheless, did you give your promise to ask me no questions, and you are breaking that promise."

"To which I must reply, Cythea, that when a man promises not to ask questions upon something that is about to be said to him, his good faith is surprised if by that promise he is compelled to be silent upon a vital question. It is evident you obtained from me that concession, well knowing how fervently I keep my promise, and in the view of avoiding answers to my just and upright inquiries. Leave the breaking of my word, I beg, to myself and my conscience. I have a right to obtain some clear answers to my questions, and will have them!"

"Will! You never used such a word to me before!"

"You never treated me as you have to-day."

"What if I refuse to answer?"

"I say I will have replies."

She turned slightly pale. She had found him ever so yielding, gentle, that she was not prepared for this sudden outburst of determination.

"I see you have denied me," she replied, humbly. "Perhaps," she continued, "it is fortunate for me that I have taken the settled determination to break off our engagement!"

"You have no right to do so."

"What! Has a woman no right to change her mind?"

"No woman can justify herself in breaking her promise to marry a man unless she justly, fairly and honestly gives her reasons for so doing. Would a man be justified in such an act?"

"That is a very different matter."

"How so?"

"Because when a man gives up a woman without explanation or justification of his conduct, the woman is compromised."

"And what of the happiness of a man when the woman gives him up without explanation or justification?"

She hesitated for a moment, and then she replied, "I should have thought that a self-respecting man would not have condescended to seek an explanation of a woman who had behaved so unjustly!"

"You will not escape, Cythea. You shall give the explanation!"

"Ah, this is too infamous!"

"It is you who behave infamously. We have been engaged two years. When we met, you were sixteen, I twenty-two. You have never intimated any dissatisfaction, and now suddenly, here in the square enclosure, you tell me that you have decided to give me up. I ask for an explanation, and I am justified in insisting upon having it."

"You are determined?"

"I am—most determined."

"Then listen."

"Speak the truth, Cythea."

"I will. I have desired to avoid this explanation because, after hearing it, I am afraid that you will despise me."

"Perhaps," he said, "it would only be kind to make me despise you if you are going to play me false; thereby you would lessen my suffering."

"I give you up because I have not sufficient courage to meet poverty."

"What question of poverty is there?" he cried. "I have a respectable income, and my expectations are very large. I am unable to understand you."

"It is true your expectations are very large, but it may be many years before they are realized."

"But my own income is nearly five hundred a-year."

"Papa allows me almost that for dress and spending money."

"I am your equal in birth, and your father has never opposed our known friendship. Surely, he may have guessed we were engaged."

"He may have guessed, but he has never spoken. To make you understand my position, you must learn a little of my family history."

"What!" cried Ezra Sedgemoir, almost angrily; "what can your family history have to do with our engagement?"

"All," she said, in a calculating voice. "My father, and a cousin named Ishmael Petreer, were the only blood relations of the man who left my father his enormous fortune. My father obtained the preference over his cousin by fraud."

"And you can thus speak calmly of your father's crime?"

"It was perpetrated before my time; and I am so far justified in my rejection of yourself, that it is in order to do justice to the only son of Ishmael Petreer that I break with you."

"Great Heaven! What do you mean, Cythea?"

"Old people repent, and my father is no longer a young man. He repents of his conduct to Mr. Petreer, and he contemplates easing his conscience by marrying me to my cousin Ishmael, whom I have never seen, so that he may return to the son what he stole, or, rather, manoeuvred away from the father."

"Ah, Cythea!" cried the earnest lover; "and do you think that I can despise you for the act you contemplate? Alas! when I have lost you I shall the more be desolate, because you have sought to sacrifice your love to your duty, or, rather, your sense of duty. You sacrifice yourself to your father's peace of mind."

"You are giving me too good a character."

"No, I am not, but think over it. You are going to do this for life; your father is near the grave. Have you any right to sacrifice your whole existence, that his last few years may be selfishly peaceful? You see he is selfish to the end, like all bad men."

"All bad men?" cried the earnest lover; "I cannot live otherwise than I do. Luxury is absolutely necessary to me. Did I refuse my cousin, my father would adopt him the day I married you, and he would disinherite me."

"But five hundred a year is a pleasant income, and we shall have more."

"I gave fifty pounds, this morning, for a lace dress. It was while trying it that I felt I could not give up my habits, and that, obeying my father, I must give you up."

"So," he cried, leaping to his feet, "you weighed me against a bit of lace rag, and found me the less valuable!"

"Ah! I told you, you would despise me. What is to be done? We are as we are. I wish I could bear poverty—then I would elope with you."

"And I would not take you to these, my arms, to save you or myself from death. You are worthless. Thank Heaven I am saved from you by your own infamous act and words. There are plenty of good girls, one of whom will make a loving wife. Good-bye, and for ever!"

"Good-bye, dear," she said, covering her face with both hands. "Ah, if you were but rich!"

He did not hear her words. He left her in the enclosure of that fashionable square, where they habitually met, and he went his way.

## CHAPTER II.

## ANOTHER COUPLE.

"But what have I done that you wish to give me up?"

"Nothing."

"Yes; I see a secret in your face. We have been engaged for three years, and I am sure I have never given you cause for sorrow. At any time I have been ready to marry you, and at any time I have been ready to go to the end of the world with you. Speak plainly, Ishmael. What is my fault?"

"You have no fault, Judith. But I have been thinking over many things lately, and I come to the conclusion that if we married, we should not be happy."

"Why, you must have a reason."

"To commence with, you are very much richer than I am, and it is always a fault in a marriage when the man is poorer than the woman."

"You know that I would willingly give you all I have, but that my trustees are opposed to any such arrangement. But I will come to you without money if you like."

"That would be worse still, for I am comparatively poor, though I have expectations on my mother's side of my family."

"Do you not lay too much stress upon mere riches, Ishmael? Of course I know that there can be no true and continuous happiness in a state of poverty. But, on the other hand, can a husband and wife only be at peace upon so many thousands a year? For my part, I look upon a large household, and the insolence of a drove of servants, with positive loathing."

Ishmael, why do you turn from me?"

"I—I do not turn from you."

"You do. I beg you will not crush me by the intimation that you purpose abandoning me, because I am rich. You turn my new wealth upon me. You crush me with a fault from which I have no power to free myself. I would, if I could, throw all my riches in the sea. Ah, you finch!"

"It is ridiculous to speak of despoiling wealth," he said; "it affords us every comfort."

"I knew you did not despise wealth."

"I have not said that I despised wealth."

"But you abandon me for having it. Oh, if I could be rid of it! But there are my trustees, who are honest men, and who would only laugh if I talked of giving away my fortune."

"They would be quite right to protect you against yourself."

"But, Ishmael, the income would be yours. You would have it entirely under your control. I should have nothing to do with it. I would never refer to my means as your wife. I would be gentle as any beggar-maid."

"You think so. Your will is now good and correct enough. But the power and pride which wealth gave cannot be crushed. Despite all your efforts, you would assert your superiority."

"Superiority!"

"The servants would despise me."

"We will go away from England. No one about us shall know anything of your means or mine."

"You are very merciful and gentle, but I am sure the scheme would not do."

"But think what a desolation my life will be if you leave me! I am alone in the world—quite alone. You have gained my affections. What should I do without you?"

He was silent.

"Perhaps there is some other reason?"

"No."

"There is—I see it on your changed countenance. Surely I have not a rival?"

She looked suddenly in a glass. Assuredly there were few women who could compete with those royal features.

"I will write," he said, rising, and moving towards the door.

She rose before him.

"You shall not leave my house until I know all!"

"It—it will pain you."

"I am prepared."

"It will crush you."

"I have no fear of agony."

"Judith, let me go!"

"I will not, Ishmael. You have no right to play with my love, as with the affection of a child! You sought me out, you have made me love you, and now you purpose throwing me aside. You can accuse me of no harm."

"Indeed, no."

"Of no meanness, treachery, or even caprice! I am what I look—an earnest, trusting woman. What right have you to cast me off? Speak. If you act justly, I will yield."

"Then—then I have learnt that there is madness in your family, and you have no right to marry. I should be committing a social sin to marry you."

He had conquered her.

She fell at his feet, crushed with the force and power of what he had said.

He lifted her up, called for help, and showed many signs of great mental distress.

Finally, when at her request, they were left alone again, she said, quite calmly, "If you speak the truth, you are quite right. But I have never been told anything of these things. Is it really true that there is insanity in my family?"

"Yes, Judith; two of your aunts, an uncle, and several cousins all died mad. I have recently seen a great deal of doctors and their waps, and it was by the merest chance that, in the first place, I learnt that there was this hereditary blight in your family."

"I believe you," she said, "and I love you not any the less, Ishmael; but—"

"Yes, Judith."

"I think, knowing how much I love you, that you might have taken pity upon me. You might have married and protected me. I would never have made a complaint; and, if the fatal inheritance came to me, I should not have been alone in the world to fight it. I shall love you for ever! I will not ask you to marry; but you will promise me to refrain from taking a wife for say, two years? I may have overcome my misery by that time, in some measure."

"I promise, dear Judith, upon one condition."

"Yes."

"That you go away from London, and make no inquiries concerning me."

"I promise that, dear; but shall I never see you?"

"Yes, Judith, now and again—I promise you that."

She kissed his hand, maintained a wonderful calmness, saw him to the door, and then turned back into her exquisite, yet home-like, house, utterly desolate and despairing.

Six weeks after that interview, Ishmael Petreer married his second cousin, Cythea Bessbroughton, and the marriage was made quite public.

The shifty conscience of the old man, Carttar Bessbroughton, was consoled, and both his daughter and Ishmael that they had done their duty.

They had effected nothing of the kind. They were actuated by that scandalous greed that thirsts for wealth, which had prompted their fathers to lie and cheat in the struggle to get Harpagon's wealth.

They had inherited greed, and they were cast together for life, equally greedy, mistrustful, and ungenerous.

Had Ishmael married Judith Chaldeen, had Cythea taken Ezra Sedgemoir for a husband, the grasping tendencies of both would have been modified.

As it fell out, they came together mutually to weary and disgust each other.

They had no chance of happiness.

## III.

## THE VICTIM.

It can never be too frequently enunciated, that it is the innocent who always suffer with the guilty, and only too frequently, they suffer for them.

The news of Ishmael's marriage fell upon Judith with murderous effect.

When she was once again sufficiently herself to take action, she asked herself the query—had he told her the truth when he stated that her family, of whom she was the last, were afflicted with insanity?

She made active inquiries, to learn that the relatives he had named had certainly died in a state of insanity, but that, in every instance, the death was remotely due to previous habits of intemperance.

In other words, she learnt that what the doctors call dipsomania, or craving for drink, had previously destroyed the reason of these unfortunates.

Some doctors maintain that dipsomania is hereditary; others deny this theory.

But no medical man could be sufficiently rash to urge that, in a family given to dipsomania, that necessarily all members must inherit, and practise, the fatal habit of intoxication.

Miss Judith Chaldeen felt, therefore, that Ishmael's excuse for not marrying her was a monstrous falsehood, the more iniquitous that it was a pretence at truth.

In her case she never drank anything of an intoxicating nature, and, therefore, any accusation of drinking propensities, or their anticipation, was cruelly unfair.

Nevertheless, there must have been a suspicion of insanity in the family, apart from the tendency of its members to habits of drunkenness.

Had this not been the case, she never could have done what she did.

Some three weeks after the marriage she made her will.

Her lawyers remonstrated with her very gravely over the terms of this document; but they did not alter her determination.

Two days afterward she visited, accompanied by a friend, the house of a celebrated insanity doctor, and to him she explained that she had made a very eccentric will, which, in event of her death, might be opposed by some very distant relative. She was going abroad to live, and she, therefore, wished that, before she left, there might be evidence that she was in complete possession of her senses.

The great insanity doctor smiled hard.

"Eccentricity it not madness; on the contrary, it is generally associated with very powerful minds," he said.

He tried her in all possible ways, and ultimately he pronounced his visitor sane.

She went on the following day with another friend to a second medical man, who especially practised amongst maniacal patients.

On a third day she, with yet another friend, visited a doctor under similar conditions.

This trio belonging to the faculty of medicine pronounced the young lady quite sane, and all paid her compliments on her looks.

So mysterious is inceptive insanity.

By that time her household had been dismissed, all but her housekeeper, who was to accompany her abroad.

The servants were vastly sorry to part from