

## The Mother Joy.

Sitting at her sewing,  
My little lady sighs!  
Her shining needle going  
So fast, it fairly flies—  
Can ne'er upstrip the fancies  
With which fond Hope entrances  
Her soul and lights her eyes.

Every little tender  
Soft tracery, that's wrought  
By those dear, dainty, slender  
Fair fingers, seems a thought.  
Ah, love thro' all her art goes  
Some tendril from heart goes  
With every stitch that's caught!

Sighing, not for sadness,  
Ah, no, she is not sad!  
My lady sighs for gladness,  
Ah, no, she is not mad!  
With joy! And yet dim fears, too,  
Look up, as she draws near to  
The day that makes her glad!

In some happy hour,  
On that so happy breast,  
Oh, will there bloom a flower?  
Oh, will there come a guest  
Straight down to her from heaven?  
Oh, will a bird, God-given,  
Come winging to that nest?

## THE BEAUTIFUL CLAUDINE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

Along the dusty highway, still brilliant with the setting sun, the evening mail man passed in a jolting rumble of wheels from his ancient carriole and a ringing of hoofs from his meagre mare. Then it was that Claudine, the "beautiful Claudine," as the villagers called her, showed herself on the sill of her little white cottage, her hand above her eyes, her elbow elevated, permitting you to see in the shadow of the armpit a drop of moisture, red as blood, from the fading of an undergarment. She stood there silent and motionless, like a picture in lighter tints against the darker background of the chamber, but with a joyous expectancy dawning in her eyes, a swelling movement of her ample breast, a quick pulsing of the blood under the golden brown skin, the full red lips parted above the whiteness of the dazzling teeth.

Far away over the peaks the sun was sinking to rest, its last rays climbing slowly from horn to horn of the wooded hills, lighting up the sombre verdure of the oaks with points of brilliancy, quivering like flame against the blue horizon and enveloping, as with a parting caress, the rounded summit of a naked hill, whose long slopes ended at the turning of the road that stretched into the shadow, a strip of dull grayness, soft as a ribbon.

From among this chain of hills, extending as far as the eye could reach in the gathering evening light, rose the deep and sonorous cry of the carters, urging on their beasts, engaged in hauling the stone from mammoth quarries which gnawed out the heart of these same peaks, still touched at the crest by the dying sun. Broad immense galleries, these quarries of—stretching for miles through the bowels of the earth, supported by pillars, left in the stratum of stone and looking like a buried city suddenly disinterred. It was here in this labyrinth that Claudine's thoughts were roving, in search of her man.

In her mind she saw him plainly, this toiling quarryman, young and handsome as herself, perched aloft on a frail scaffolding and working at the quarry's roof in the tremulous light of lanterns like twinkling stars, the monotonous chink, chink of the hammers repeated by the drip, drip of the subterranean waters. But now, since the evening postman has gone by, Claudine knew that the day's work was ended, her man descending with others and arranging his tools—quickly, too, thinking of her and impatient for her kisses. Even now he was on his way through those gloomy corridors where the carts and wagons had hollowed great ruts in the mud.

In fact, some of the men, in gaudy belts and with coats thrown over their shoulders, had begun to appear, climbing briskly the steep white road, their voices mounting higher and higher, like the waves of sunlight, and rough and rude as the country. The file steadily increased and grew longer; and one by one Claudine recognized the pallid faces, the features doubly distinct through the whitening of the powdered stone—her man had not come yet. All at once, even whilst she rummaged with her gaze the fast crowding pathways and the groups on the hill itself, a column of dirt and debris leaped high in the air, followed instantly through the valley by a crash like thunder. The quarry had blown up. And Claudine lay senseless on the ground.

Under the gutted earth, covered with crumbled houses, cracked and crashed as by a monstrous hammer, deep in the black and inaccessible depths of the buried galleries, fifty or more of the quarrymen were buried also, despairing, hopeless of rescue, dying perhaps, if not already dead. At the point where the engineers worked with heart and soul to pierce an entombed gallery, Claudine knelt beside them, eager, heart-sick, refusing to stir a step and still awaiting her man.

Foreighdays she remained there unable to believe in the disaster, unable to be consoled, her burning eyes stubbornly riveted upon the opening, little by little growing larger. But these efforts provoked new crumbings—the waters flooded the passages, the work had to be stopped. Then and not till then did she climb the hill to the place where the men who had escaped the disaster strained at the pumps. Kneeling

by them now she regarded the monstrous piston rising and falling with a mechanical, continuous movement, whose dull shocks at regular intervals lulled and soothed her with the sweetness of hope.

But soon the pumps, too, gave out, choked, doubtless, with the rubbish that refused to flow. The rescuers, white, haggard, helpless, sorrowfully disbanded and turned away. Claudine remained alone by the ravaged earth, the abortive, abandoned work crushed, inert, feeling stir in her anguished soul but a single desire—to be herself at rest.

"Claudine!" murmured a voice at her ear.

She raised her eyes. It was a quarryman by the name of Pierre, whom she had noticed toiling with the others. She saw his blistered hands, the soil on his clothes, and suddenly without a word, before the pitying sorrow of his gaze, burst into a storm of tears.

As for Pierre, he, too, found no word to say, but sitting beside her allowed her to cry on, stroking her hand tenderly at every sob, an answering grief dimming his own eyes. Gradually as she grew calmer Claudine knew that Pierre was talking to her of things whose sense still escaped her, but whose soft, soothing monotone quieted her to the docility of a child. She listlessly permitted him to draw her with him, scarcely conscious of what he did, whilst he with the gentle, solicitous care that one shows to a sick mind and fancy coaxed and persuaded her homeward, as from time to time she stopped with long sighs and renewed tears.

The long days passed; the imprisoned men were lost, unfindable, dead, they declared, crushed by falling rocks or thrown out by the enormous force of the air from the crumbled caverns.

To hear this was a relief to Claudine's strained nerves and senses; they were not tortured at least, and in the long unoccupied hours when they talked and speculated thus she listened sadly and in silence, but finding a certain pleasure in this envelopment of neighborly pity.

She seemed to herself to be awakening from a long sleep, to be returning from a distant journey; at the same time, though unconscious of it at first, the exigencies of the present and of the coming life began to present themselves to her mind. She had her life to take up again and, perhaps—with a progressive growing of a slow fear—to take it up with want and solicitude added.

She began to feel more interest in the things about her: in the success, above all, of the subscriptions to be raised to alleviate the disaster, and she felt a great peace, almost a joy, the day when Pierre returned from the adjacent city to tell her that the widows were truly to be cared for—that she was down for six hundred francs.

Then without occupation and in the patient waiting for the relief to come she every day returned to the quarry. Frequently Pierre accompanied her, always with his gentle courtesy, and there they talked together in lowered tones as if respecting a tomb. In these visits as to a cemetery, through the melancholy of the thick woods to the eternal stirring of the same thoughts, the tears of Claudine by degrees ceased to flow. They arrived soon at talking freely, then at reveries, walking slowly, picturing, perhaps, the awakening of new possibilities. The weight seemed to lift from the breast of the young woman, the horizon so long closed about her to widen and open, and in the trembling dawn of the rising future there was a new, an indefinable charm, growing and deepening in these mutual silences. Sorrow had run itself out and as the spring sap mounts in the fibres of the tree trunks, a new love—of which as yet they did not speak out of deference to this tomb before which they wandered and which had brought them together—grew with the passing moments.

"Claudine," said Pierre at last, "why should we not marry each other?"

"It is not two months yet," she answered, suddenly saddened.

"I know that, but I would not hurry you. I spoke to be in time. What say you, Claudine? Yes or no?"

"Yes," sighed she, "later on."

It was then an understood thing between them and on which their thoughts rested more and more: yielding to the dead but a friendly memory, a tender gratitude. They began to lay plans in these daily strollings with the manner of frank lovers and ere long on that crumbled hill, amidst an entanglement of vines and blossoms, smiles took the place of the flowing tears, kisses the place of the smiles.

It was close to evening; Claudine and Pierre as usual rambled among the stones of the quarry. There in the gray half light and in the slow dull stirring of peasant natures, they regarded through the trees below them the silvery shimmering of the brook, further on the windings of the white road and the stormy hills which spread themselves out and shut them in like a giant circle. All at once a singular sound arrested their footsteps. It was in the soil beneath them, the scratching or moving of some beast, doubtless, at the end of his hole. They bent above the crevasse by which they stood; there the sound was plainer, more distinct, like the despairing struggle of something in a narrow place, the rattling volley of rolling debris. A strange, sudden terror nailed them motionless, then at the same moment the same thought came to both; the quarrymen inclosed in their

living tomb were not all dead; some one was mining through the mountain.

And from the depths now came a feeble call, faint, smothered, scarcely more than a gasping sigh.

"It is—it is he!" breathed Claudine, her knees knocking together.

Pierre leaped to his feet, livid also. He! The dead, already so far away, already lost in the gulf of irremediable things! This return was for him, Pierre, a shattered love, a broken future, that smiling, beautiful future over which the 600 francs of his Claudine spread a radiance like the sparkle of a fortune!

What right had he to return, this dead man, whose face no longer appeared to him irradiated with friendliness and grateful memories, but as a menacing spectre erecting itself from a crumbled dream?

Meanwhile a new call came from the depths, in which one plainly read the torture of that imprisoned wretch, trapped under the earth for two long months, supporting life on roots and water, groveling in blackest night, but stimulated, urged to the battle for existence by the perfume of the sunny woods that doubtless reached him through the crevices of the crevasse.

Pierre uttered a responsive cry and threw himself backward, the prey of a poignant struggle. But the call came again—lanceable, sinister, pleading; he could bear it no longer; a wave of pity flooded his soul.

"Wait!" he cried; "wait but a little: I will run; I will return at once with a cord; the hole is just big enough; wait, wait!"

And Pierre, without a single word or a glance at Claudine—did he fear that his purpose would fail him?—took the hill at a mad run.

Left alone—with him—Claudine's eyes clung as if glued to a heavy boulder that overhung the edge of the crevasse; yes the very edge, poised like a bird ready to spring. She trembled convulsively; a breath almost would detach that stone, would send it crashing to the bottom of that mine whence came that wailing moan; the cry of a man for succor.

God in heaven! Her man!

Swiftly as Pierre had leaped, she, Claudine, now leaped; but how she staggered, how her legs bent under her as if she were drunk! But no matter; she must reach that boulder; she had reached it—it stirred, turned, engulfed itself in the hole. There was a thud, a strangled cry, then silence; soundless as the quarried stone.

Silence and solitude both, for Pierre had not had time to return from his errand of mercy, and Claudine—with clasped hands and eagerly listening ears—Claudine was now in truth—alone.

## The Beauty of the Matron.

The notion still held by certain shallow women that maturity is ugliness is one of the most incomprehensible pieces of nonsense of the time. Here is a fair muddler in one of our contemporaries complimenting Mme. Albani on having overcome her matronliness and on the renewed girliness of her appearance. From this I should judge that women who live on public exhibition fear nothing so much as development. If they can only stay all their lives in a piping and glutinous sweetness and not grow, they are satisfied. To get on in appearance, or in character, or in strength is a calamity. In this extraordinary view of things a green codling is better than a ripe pippin. Women who exhibit themselves have only one standard of merit—and that is youth. Poor creatures, they do not know that the pretty girl ought to become the handsome woman, and never reaches her full splendor until she is a matron. They cannot comprehend the fact that fixed beauty has no existence except in death, and even then only when the embalmers are put in his work. The law of beauty in life is the law of development and attainment, and the beauty of a matron and the beauty of a miss differ from each other as one star differs from another in glory—and, curiously enough, the older the star the more beautiful it becomes.

Women who think of nothing but how they shall stay young, are women of characterless minds. All things considered, the greatest woman is she who can grow old gloriously, and defy time with something better than enamel. But your woman who is professionally on exhibition has got to bring to the market what the public most desires. And it is a patent fact that the mob would rather look at the pastryness of youth than at the perfection of personality. It is this popular instinct that makes exhibiting women starve themselves, enslave themselves, prison themselves, restrict their functions, suppress their minds, and crucify their bodies.

## Since the Baby Died.

The house has been so straggly still  
Since the baby died,  
The birds no longer seem to tell  
Since the baby died,  
The saucy fancies and shades of gloom  
Lark in the corners of the room;  
The roses have a faded bloom  
Since the baby died.

The stars seem brighter than before  
Since the baby died,  
We're nearer to the other shore  
Since the baby died,  
Not in his anger, but in love,  
Not as an enemy, but a lover,  
There's less love and more above  
Since the baby died.