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AU REVOIR.

Ah Sweet! the light of life seems all to fade,
Since far away from thee I now must go;
The happy days late past are whelmed with weo
That rises like a tide, and storms have made
A ruin of past hopes; yet undismayed
I face all grief, no wave can overflow
One steadfast hope whence others grow:
We meet again—on this my heart is stayed.

The might of faith doth make the weakest strong,
And faith of mine doth join me to that strength;
All things are possible, to me belong
All hope and trust and joy, until at length
Faith hath reward, I know not how or when—
This one thing only, we shall meet again.

W. P. M.

THE PLEASURES OF PROOF-READING.

Among all the printed matter that comes through the mail per book post, is there anything that approaches in importance the earliest proof sheets of your first book? What a strange yet familiar look they have! Your first observation made with regret, is that words and sentences, when congealed in cold type, produce a less favorable impression on your mind than when viewed in the heat of composition. This is unfortunate, but you resolutely conquer the chill that creeps over you, and diligently apply yourself to the work of correction, with the determination to let no error escape. There are a good many errors—typographical, topographical, historical, rhetorical, and (shall I say?) grammatical. It is in the power of every tiny piece of type to outrage your feelings in some way; either by appearing where it ought not to be, failing to appear where it ought to be, taking up a position above or below its fellows, or standing on its head. When you sternly discountenance all these vagaries, it has other resources. It loves to appear in a partially mutilated condition, or imperfectly covered with ink. Driven from this stronghold, it will go hard with it if it can't belong to another font of type. When you encounter an italic letter among its Roman brethren, there is no difficulty in detecting the offender. Guilt is written on every abject curve of its body. But sometimes in the middle of a word you encounter a letter a shade shorter or darker than its fellows; it looks like an interloper, but you are not quite sure. You touch it with your pen, and make an interrogation point opposite it on the margin. Then the printer takes out that dubious letter, and puts an interrogation mark in its place, giving the word an extremely novel and picturesque appearance, but making it somewhat difficult to pronounce.

But if you are troubled with a literary conscience, the process of proof-reading is continually beset with interrogation points, invisible to the outward eye, but none the less imperative in their nature. Is this sentence obscure and affected? Is that one childishly simple? Doesn't that other one seem to be straining after effect? Does it reach what it's straining after? Wouldn't it be possible to cut out the strain and leave the effect? Where is the delicate line between lightness and

flippancy, between carefulness and stiffness, between wholesome sentiment and nauseous sentimentality? The paragraph which seemed almost poetic, when you wrote it, now seems almost meaningless; how can you know what it actually is? If your hero has no faults how can he escape being a prig. If he has faults how can he be a hero? If your paragraphs are long, will not the average reader think you dull? If they are short, will not the reader who is above the average relegate you to the rank of a writer upon a weekly story paper?

With these problems pressing upon your brain, it occurs to you that the rest of the family may offer you solutions to some of them. Upon the announcement that your first proofs have arrived they say, "Oh!" an exclamation which, upon consulting the dictionary, you find is susceptible of a variety of meanings. They bid you keep a firm hand on your adjectives, and be careful how you spell. "Don't go to correcting a sentence by ear," say they, "but consult your grammar, and make sure you're correct." You are naturally of a patient disposition, but when one of them, inspecting the sheets with an air of settled gloom, says, "I fear this is going to be a flimsy sensational novel; tell me does it teach a lesson?" You cannot forbear to reply, "Yes, a history lesson;" and as there is really a good deal of historical information in your book, you make good your escape for that time.

If you are fortunate enough to have as chief critic one who is as interested in the work as you yourself are, the pleasures and puzzles of proof-reading are largely increased. The advantage of a better judgment and finer taste is incalculable, but, on the other hand, you don't know what to think when you find some of your phrases denounced as Americanisms. Of course if you had said—if it were possible for you to have said—that your heroine's mother had, on account of some misdeed, given that young lady "Hail, Columbia," or if you could have allowed your hero to exclaim approvingly and slangily to his intimate friend, "Good Henry Clay head on you!" or, in its abbreviated form, "Good clay head!" then you could readily understand that these objectionable expressions were Americanisms. But there are others of which you are not sure. A friend of mine once decided that to get the start of, as in the phrase "they'll not get the start of him," was an Americanism. Afterwards we discovered it in Shakespeare. Was she disconcerted? Not in the least. She merely said, "Well, if Shakespeare can bring himself to use Americanisms I'm sure I wouldn't be so particular."

After the first chapter has been returned to the printers the glow of novelty fades, and the importance of the work, in your own estimation, unconsciously dwindles. You look gratefully, but with some misgiving, at your kindly neighbor, whose faith in the value of your performance is so great that she assures you she is going to save the proceeds of her next churning of butter to buy it with. You bid her beware how she recklessly exchanges butter that she knows to be good for a book whose quality is unknown, but the good soul is not to be turned from her intention.

Musing idly upon the ease with which we can "tell" good butter, and the difficulty of giving a perfectly just decision upon a book, your last proof-sheets, persued absent-mindedly, drop from your hand. They seem all right, but 'twill be safer to read them again. Suddenly, with a thrill of horror, you stop short, your hair perceptibly changes color, and your rigid lead pencil points to a paragraph in praise of the mirror-like qualities of a certain Canadian sheet of water, which you had written