

greatly responsible for the appalling decline of juvenile crime, we would not misuse our talents. We would move heaven and earth to double the statistics. Revolvers and bull's-eye lanterns should be in every well educated boy's pocket! We would—But what is the use of these vain regrets? What is the good of being ambitious when one has not power and imagination to support one? Ah! ours has indeed been a life of blighted hopes.

THE END.

## THE ROMANCE OF SIR RICHARD.

Read before "The Tuesday Night Club," November 27.

### PROLOGUE.

By brake and bower, by fen and field,  
And lakes that Nature's bosom pearled,  
With shadowy lance and silver shield,  
Came riding Night into the world.  
The stars in countless myriads glowed,  
Like jewels, in his sombre helm,  
And earth grew silent as he rode  
Again through his reconquered realm.

The Wind, his unseen trumpeter,  
Gave challenge to the recreant Day;  
There was no answer, save the stir  
Of leaves, that turned to see the fray;—  
No answer; and the Wind was still,  
And all the leafage fell asleep,  
While Night rode slowly up the hill  
Into the ruined Norman Keep.

O'er pointed arch and crumbling wall,  
In tangled wildness, crept the vine,  
And in the empty banquet hall  
In flower-cups swam the dew for wine.  
A moonbeam, like the hand of fame  
That points to greatness through time's gloom,  
Fell on a sculptured knight, whose name  
One still could read upon his tomb.

What lovers' fancy ruled our brains  
That we should seek the ruined hall,  
And listen for the minstrel strains  
Were wont to cheer the vassals all?  
Why stole we from the lighted room,  
The merry laugh, the graceful dance,  
To sit with Night beside the tomb  
And speak of days of shield and lance?

The only minstrel was the owl,  
The only vassal was the bat,  
The shadows, like gaunt monks in cowl,  
Stood round the place wherein we sat;  
And, while my shoulder propped thy head,  
Thy fair hand put the vines aside,  
And I, in quaint, old metre, read,  
How brave Sir Richard lived and died.

"He was a noble Christian knight"—  
So wrote the long-forgotten bard—  
"A doughty champion of the right,  
His lady's smile his sole reward.  
This noble follower of the cross  
Before Jerusalem was slain.  
All Merrie England mourns his loss,  
Nor hopes to see his like again."

So fair the night, so great our love,  
So sweet the joy of solitude,  
We stirred not from the tomb, but wove  
Sir Richard's romance as we would.  
"The lady fair am I," saidst thou,  
"Sir Richard, dearest, shalt thou be.  
As well would Richard mine, I trow,  
As he for his love, fight-for me."

Then played we twain a mimic play  
(And in the moonlight deemed it real),  
Of bygone days of chivalry,  
Fair dames and knights in burnished steel.  
I told how lonely watch I kept  
One night—that same pale moon above,—  
And thou at jousting how I swept  
The lists, and crowned thee Queen of Love.

### I.

#### THE VIGIL.

All day the courtyard teemed with men,  
All day the tinkling hammers rang,  
All day, from many a windy den,  
Skyward the ruddy forge-fires sprang.  
The day it was before the tilt,  
And swarthy armourers showered their blows  
On lance and shield, on blade and hilt,  
From dawn till night-dews washed the rose.

The king was come, with all his court,  
The tourney with his smile to grace;  
Perchance to break a lance in sport,  
Or clothyard in the white to place.  
All England's noblest knights were there,  
Each eager in the lists to prove  
His skill, and crown his lady fair  
The Queen of Beauty and of Love.

Darkly the moated waters swept  
Around the castle's massive pile,  
That night when I my vigil kept  
Of knighthood in this gloomy aisle.  
The yew tree tapped the tinted panes,  
The sad owl hooted in the glade,  
And Philomel, in plaintive strains,  
Her secret to the night betrayed.

Midsummer lightnings, sweetly shy,  
Low in the far horizon burned,  
Like love-light in thine hazel eye,  
When mine upon thy face is turned:  
And as amidst the gloom I stood,  
With the departed great, alone,  
A moonbeam, through the solitude,  
Came creeping on, from stone to stone.

I pondered on the noble dead,  
And on the greatness of my race;  
And where the moonbeam lay I read  
How one chose death before disgrace.  
Then, as the light crept softly by,  
I read the legends, one by one,  
And vowed that, unto death, would I  
Of noble sires prove worthy son.

I thought upon the knight's estate  
I was to enter on the morn,  
His love of truth, of wrong his hate,  
His pity for the feeble born.  
I thought how ready was his blade  
To set Oppression's victims free;  
And then my noblest thoughts, sweet maid,  
As steel to loadstone, turned to thee.

Companion of my boyhood hours,  
Thy memory cheered me in the gloom,  
As the rich scent of scattered flowers  
Of half its sorrow strips the tomb.  
Methought thou wast beside me there,  
Within the dimly lighted aisle,  
Thy voice on the enamoured air,  
The shadows routed by thy smile.

Methought I heard thy bird-voice say:  
"Hold fast to every noble thought,  
And, as this night shall find the day,  
So shalt thou to the light be brought."  
Methought thou gavest me words of cheer,  
Methought I felt thy soft caress,  
And duty shone before me clear,  
And vanished sin and wretchedness.

Then, suddenly, the risen Sun  
Stood radiant on the marble floor.  
The night its shadowy course had run;  
At last my lonely watch was o'er.  
I left the precincts of the dead  
And to the dewy courtyard passed,  
Before the king to bow my head,  
And rise Sir Richard, knight at last.

### II.

#### THE TOURNAMENT.

All through thy dreary watch-night, love,  
I sat within my turret room,  
And prayed the heavenly Lord above  
Protect thee in the charnel gloom.  
I saw the moonbeam as it crept  
To light the sculptured legendry,  
And envied it, because it kept  
A night-long vigil, dear, with thee.

When laggard morning came at last  
And thou, the flower of chivalry,  
Wast summoned by the trumpet blast  
To combat in the mimic fray,  
I went to see thee at the tilt,  
And, though I knew how strong thine arm,  
To cheek my warm blood played the jilt,  
For fear that thou shouldst suffer harm.

I saw the king the signal give,  
I saw thee spur against the knight,  
And cried: "They can not meet and live!"  
And veiled mine eyes to hide the sight.  
But when uprose the vast concourse,  
One-minded in its praise and mirth,  
I peeped. Unharm'd upon thy horse  
Thou wast, thy foeman borne to earth.

And ever, as the day wore on,  
Thou hast, methought, a charmed life,  
For of the noblest knights was none  
Could overcome thee in the strife.  
Thou wast as moveless as a rock  
That, compassed by an angry sea,  
Undaunted, meets its fiercest shock  
And hurls it back confusedly.

The day was drawing to its end,  
And Night was tilting with the Sun,  
When thou before the king didst bend  
And take the crown that thou hadst won.  
Adown the lists I watched thee ride,  
One instant did our fond eyes meet,  
And then, of England's knights the pride  
Laid the gold trophy at my feet.

### EPILOGUE.

"What said the king?" I, laughing, cried,  
"Did he not take thee by the hand  
And say, if I was England's pride  
Thou wast the fairest in the land?  
And when uprose the shining sun  
Upon my first of happiest days,  
Did he not see us twain made one,  
And loud as any cry thy praise?"

'Twas thus Sir Richard's life we wove  
And brought it to a happy end,  
For happy lovers ever love  
All other lovers to befriend.  
Then ere we from the subject turned,  
I, as befits a poet true,  
From what of knighthood we had learned  
A moral for the present drew.

I said: "We still have knights as great  
As those who fought that tourney morn,  
Who love the truth, hold wrong in hate,  
And pity show the feeble born.  
Still lends the modern knight his aid  
To set Oppression's victim free,  
And in his soul some lily maid  
Still whispers: 'Seek nobility.'"

We rose in silence from the tomb,  
Scarce needing speech our thoughts to share,  
And slowly from the castle gloom  
Passed out into the midnight air.  
Arm twined in arm, and souls linked fast,  
We sought the revellers again,  
While Night kept vigil with the Past,  
Each happy in its own brief reign.

Montreal.

ARTHUR WEIR.

## SORROW.

### AN ALLEGORY.

One day, when I was sad, my spirit went  
In quest of sorrow in the autumn woods,  
Whereon the frost had pressed its brumal ban,  
Despoiling of its emerald hue the sward.  
Thick strewing banks of moss with sorrel leaves,  
And spreading silence where sweet songsters sang.  
I found her at the runnel's rush-lined side,  
Walking the sodden leaves and weeds among.  
Her trailing robes, in half-neglected style,  
Bespoke the absence of her thoughts from things  
Which other women, in all moods, regard.  
Resigned she looked and given to musing much  
Upon the miseries of her lone life;  
Yet when I'd gazed awhile at her calm face,  
I saw that she was not betroubled aught  
With moping melancholy's grievous fits,  
But by them was enhanced in beauty, deep  
And lucid as her own complacent soul.  
In her ripe countenance I thought I saw  
Maturing a full harvest of that grain  
Dropped by God's Spirit on such fertile hearts  
As can receive and nourish tender truths,  
Which would not thrive if sown in barren soil.  
Life was with her a time of frost or drought,  
Broken at intervals by pleasure's sun  
Or plenteous dew, in whose nocturnal fall  
Refreshment came unto her drooping faith;  
And hers it was to keep alive through these  
The precious instincts of her sweeter self;  
To ward off each inclement blight and save,  
With her blood's vital warmth from with'ring chills,  
The hundredfold attainment of the crop,  
Which at its reaping repays anxious care.  
No solace sought she from the mortal side,  
But that same influence broadcast she shed,  
Tuning her words to each poor sufferer's woe,  
As if she drew from some mysterious source  
Abundantly beyond her need, and so  
Became the channel for a stream of peace.  
Where'er she moved a blessing seemed to come,  
And whomsoever she blest, believed as she  
What comfort she bestowed was not her own.  
Pensive I grew, and deeper dived I in  
The holiness with which her presence filled  
My sphere, until I turned to find her gone,  
Leaving no shadow on the path she took.  
A fruitful gladness, welling from my heart,  
As I returned did permeate me through;  
It shone, like a bright halo, o'er my mien,  
And lighted up my face; I felt, as one  
Permitted for a while with angel's speech,  
Quitting the hallowed spot transfigured by  
The fulgent rays of their sublimity.  
Since then, though sorrow meet me in disguise,  
I know the matron of the sombre woods,  
And strive to greet her with an outstretched hand,  
Thinking of what that meeting to me brought,  
And how the sweetest characters are those  
Most intimate with sorrow's benison.

Toronto.

WILL T. JAMES.