HER ONLY LOVE

(By Mme Blanc)

"What kind o' verses? Tell me about them"

"Well there were four * * * You'll laugh, but I've read them over and over again to myself as I sat sewing till I really imagined they were my own, they used to beat with my heart, come and go with my breath, they seemed to give me air and a breeze in the middle of summer * * * I couldn't do without them."

And in a dreamy voice Louise recited:

"'Butterflies white as snow,
Are flying in swarms o'er the sea,
When can I—do let me know—
Wing the air's blue roadway with ye?'

"I caught many others like that in newspapers, by chance, forgetting the beginnings and the ends, I kept just the parts I needed—for instance, just enough to imagine the ocean or so fancy I really saw the butterflies going by 'Wing the air's blue roadway' — is that not lovely?"

"Don't you know whose they are?"

"No, and I don't care. I know nothing at all It's been said to me often enough!" And a great sigh raised her hollow chest

"You'll never make me believe that you could not have married if you had wished to, Louise"

Her expressive eyebrows contracted slightly, her lips parted hesitatingly

"Yes, perhaps * * * once * * * I was no longer very young. But it would have separated us. I didn't want to * * *"

And I understood that it was only one more sacrifice made to the idol This idol's name by predestination, no doubt, was Aimee, a tiny idol, the most fragile one ever surrounded by offerings and incense — one of those delicate Parisian blossoms that sometimes, by a miracle, bloom on a dung-heap. To look at her one would have said that in that slight little blonde, with her convex forehead, her determined chin her somewhat hard manners and physiognomy, the brain was being developed at the expense of the heart, but the very rarity of her proofs of affection made them all the more precious to Louise's mind When Aimee kissed her or merely seemed pleased with a gift, she felt that this was enough to do wonders for, and in fact, she did wonders all the time, working nights as she did all day, always ready when there was a question of overtime If her eyes closed with fatigue over her work, she saw a rosy little face that once was so pale, a child's face that owed her its dimples and its pretty color, smile at her, crying "Work! work! Go on, anyway—it's for me!" And her needle would start afresh and run on like a horse that generously gives his speed though he be half foundered, when he knows that the victory depends on him An iron constitution upheld her in her fatigue When Louise was born, Ferou had not yet destroyed his herculean strength by alcohol, and his wife was still young, though now it seemed difficult to think that she had ever been so

"Everything goes to that young one now," growled the drunkard. "No one else in the house counts for anything. She'd let her father go without tobacco to give her a toy!"

In reality Louise allowed no one to make any sacrifice but herself Under the pretext that she now had "customers," and that it was impossible for her to try on dresses in a den, she rented an independent room in the same story of the house, furnished it neatly, and put her little sister in it, as in an ivory tower, where she would be sheltered from everything — from misery, bad influences, the brawling of her parents, whom she could not let the child see unless they were in "good condition." Before going to school Aimee had her chocolate, while her sister breakfasted hastily, unnoticed by the little one, on a piece of bread and cheese. To make up for this, Louise used to turn and darn for herself an old alpaca dress that was all rusty, and which she wore winter and summer alike For a time she thought she liked pretty clothes; for a short period of frivolity she had enjoyed the luxury of a ribbon or a pair of cuffs, but henceforward her only coquetry was for Aimee.

Aimee had come at the decisive hour when her big sister had felt herself even more alone than formerly Alone! Louise never found any other word to express the emptiness of her starved heart or the differences of nature which separated her from her surroundings. And now she was no longer alone. It was quite natural that Aimee should never dream of thanking her, because all the obligations, all the causes for gratitude, were on her side. She owed her this delicious plenitude, and the darling had such lovely qualities! Louise went into ecstasies over her perfections.

"As if all children were not alike," moaned Madame Ferou, incredulously "It's all your fancy. It won't do her much good going to school all the time! It would do better to train her to take my place little by little, now that I'm not able to do housework for others."

"Housework!" retorted Louise, indignantly, "No housework, nor dress-making! She's above all that Don't you see that she's always at the head of her class? Her teachers say that she learns all she wants to without any trouble. Such a good, reasonable, studious child! She'll * * * Yes, you'll succeed, my treasure!" she would say to her little sister.

And in reality the latter had made up her mind to succeed She had a firm will and a character to match The tender, foolish, and passionate things that Louise said to her wearied her a little as being exaggerations to which it would have been impossible for her to respond, but, none the less, she felt that her sister's affection was a power that it was in her interest to treat carefully, and she allowed herself to be caressed in the somewhat impatient, nervous fashion of a kitten that is seeking a means of escape even while enduring your caresses. As for Aimee being ambitious and persevering, she measured the journey of her life by the success she gained, as her sister had said, she got on, thanks to the facilities nowadays granted to poor girls to obtain an education. The day she gained her first diploma, Ferou, who had wanted to celebrate the event in this way, had a terrible attack, followed by many others, during which he saw rats dancing about, and so passed from inoffensive to furious delirium He had to be taken to an hospital. Aimee's pride suffered much more than her heart from this. She let Louise go to see their father all alone, and take him a thousand little dainties, and she let her bury him alone, too, when he died, burnt up by brandy.

Louise bought and made up all the family mourning, paid all the funeral expenses, and nursed her mother, who had taken to her bed and would not be comforted now she was no longer beaten

Her sister, however, watched her without any show of feeling—nay, even with a certain kind of haughty pity That fatiguing life, devoted to manual labor, seemed to her the most distasteful in the world, the horror and contempt she felt for it contributed not a little to stimulate her efforts in another direction

"It is strange," she said, "that in wearing yourself out as you do, my poor Louise, you have never succeeded in laying anything aside"

And Louise out of delicacy, never explained why she had not been able to economize why she had not taken advantage of certain opportunities for bettering her position, which would have made her leave her family

"My daughter Aimee wants to enter the Normal School," said Madame Ferou, on the other hand, to her neighbors "She knows how to manage better than her sister, who was not stupid either, but who, after all will never be anything but a seamstress on day's wages, unable to put aside a penny"

While her tears still continued to flow under the majestic crape headdress she now wore, Madame Ferou no longer remembered her former objections to science, she had been told that education paid The little one had been right in going in for an education, for she was just about to succeed As for attributing any of the merit of this success to Louise's efforts, it never entered her mind, nor did it ever enter Aimee's Proud and quite sure of herself, she considered life a game to be won, and found herself a very skilful player And in this she was quite right It was a wonder to find so much clear common sense and ability in the daughter of a drunkard Aimee would have given a vigorous contradiction to the theories of atavism, if her physical strength had equalled her intellectual powers. Threatened with a nervous disease, she needed expensive medicines, special baths and food, and Louise's fairy needle provided all that, and provided so well that she ended by praying for her little sister's health with her own, growing old before her time, losing her freshness and her flesh, she became actually homely

"She neglects herself too much; but, after all, how could she, at her age and with such a face, have a proper taste for dress?" thought Aimee, every time Louise tried a new dress on her

She ought to have noticed that one can feel cold at any age, and that her sister did without a winter cloak

"All habit," mused Aimee, with her hands in her muff

After a difficult examination, Aimee's over-strained, over-excited nerves felt the effort—she became anaemic The physicians advised sea-bathing, and Louise thought she would go mad when she recognized that these were beyond her means She would have done anything to have the invalid suddenly transported to some sea-beach, she cast looks of hatred upon all unknown young girls who seemed to her rich enough to procure this luxury; she had anarchistic violences of feeling against all who owned anything. Her despair softened when Aimee, who, consoling her in her peculiar way, would say

"Poor sister! What's to be done? It's not your fault that you earn so little!" in a tone which implied "If I were you I should be able to earn more

A wonderful piece of good luck came to help them In her odd moments, which means at times when others rest and sleep, Louise used to work for a former saleswoman, who had become the housekeeper of her now wealthy and retired employers While trying on the voluminous waist of this matron she learned that "the family were about to start for Treport, and looking for a person "with a diploma," who would teach the children during the vacation, for her board and lodgings Louise nearly drove the scissors into her customer's skin as she was cutting out the neck of her dress, but managed to stammer

"I think I've got what you want."

And she enumerated in detail all the talents and merits of a "very nice young lady" she knew. Two days later—how long those days and nights seemed to Louise! — the providential agent returned, bringing good news:

"Madame thought the person might suit, but would like to see her" And then only did Louise confess that she had spoken of her sister.

"Now listen to me, my girl," said the fat women, very plainly. "I'll be frank with you, this may spoil everything. They'll be afraid that the teacher has not learned good enough manners on a workman's family, and all the more as your father. * * * In short, as you understand — let me manage the whole thing, and don't you appear in it."

"Oh, exclaimed Louise, "I won't breathe Make up any story you please As long as my sister has what she needs!"

She never suspected with what pleasure Aimee had consented to keep quiet about her humble origin and her relationship to the seamstress at the same time

There was one thing that Louise's honest soul could not conceive, which, however, should have struck her long before, if she had not been going on in a dream of self-denial A barrier, imperceptible at first, but which grew day by day was rising between the one who had stripped herself of all and the chosen one to whom she had given all. Aimee no longer spoke to Louise of her studies, feeling sure that she would not be understood, it pained her to have to live with a person who had read so little and spelled so poorly, and who made grammatical mistakes in conversation, unconsciously she gently pushed her back to the inferior rank of purveyor and servant, she sought her equals—young girls provided with the semi-culture which makes great demands and great pretensions, in short, she impatiently awaited her admission to the Normal School, which would permit her to withdraw from her family for good.

The day that Aimee attained the goal so ardently desired, she said to the persons who congratulated her

"Yes, the future belongs to me! It is a great satisfaction to owe nothing to anyone but yourself! I can well say that I have made myself whatever I am!"

Louise thought that Aimee was right, after all, and that she had gained everything at the point of the sword, as it were At most all that had been done in her behalf was to keep off some material cares from her, and not force her to think of the mean necessities of everyday life

It was something no doubt, but so little when one considered retrospectively the amount of accomplished work! Had even she Louise herself, been much more than the fly on the wagon-shaft? * * * Yes, she had loved her ah! loved her so much! Love is the great supporter in this world And she had certainly given her that But Mademoiselle Ferou, the Normal School student, could not rest content with her sister's devotion, she had new friends, her classmates, her equals, persons on her own level The past was the past

"She thinks everything can be learned from books," said Louise to me, the only time I ever discovered a certain bitterness in her thoughts "Thinking counts for something, too, and a woman who lives by her needle thinks more than you may suppose. I knew how to be interested in all she was doing If she had only wanted to take a little pains, just a little, to raise me, even by doing nothing more than talking to me, the distance between us would not be so great to-day I asked her to try, but she laughed and said "that we would be too much to do! You are too old!" And it's true, I am too old," added Louise, quite disheartened

She grew very homesick when separated from her darling

"You see, Aimee has slipped out of my hands, just as my sparrow did long ago. But there's a difference it's for her welfare, and it was my wish!"

Seeing her grow weaker and weaker, I forced her to consult a physician. He ordered much quiet, a complete rest of mind, and behind her back he said to me

"Another hysterical woman! That women ought to have had all the care of her own household, a husband and children, a natural life, without excessive ambitions She has reached for the unattainable, and has broken her neck."

"Another hysterical woman!" It is so easy to say that The day when there shall be none but well-balanced minds in the world it will all be over for all kinds of heroism That hysterical woman was, however, perfectly able to control herself She choked down her jealousy, her humiliations, she never confessed them to a soul, never acknowledged what a terrible blow the departure of her sister had been — that sister who was her child as well That discreet and somewhat timid girl took no end of steps, made all sorts of requests, to gain "protection" for the new teacher She worried those among her customers who happened to know influential people; she, who never would have asked for anything on her own account, exposed herself to rebuffs, nearly became an intriguer. And when she came home and found herself face to face with her old mother, now nearly idotic, yet the only thing left to her, she tried to conjure up the vanished image of little Aimee just back from the country, so pale, so weak, so dependent on her loving kindness; then she would bury her face on the pillow on which that fair head had rested, and kiss all the old dolls and early picture-books, as if they were so many sacred relics.

Aimee Ferou has advanced rapidly in her chosen career, however crowded the paths of education may be. Nevertheless, she is always talking of injustice and the unfair advancement of others, never finding her merits sufficiently recognized She has married a young man "on her own level," in Louise's words — a gentleman in a good situation in a bank He earns less than she does, but, on the other hand, he belongs to a good family, and consented to a union with the Ferous only on the condition of taking his wife away from such surroundings.

Aimee, influenced by him, although she has very fixed ideas on the rights of women and equality in marriage, no longer finds her sister a good enough seamstress to intrust her with her best dresses

"I made her wedding dress, all the same," Louise often says, beaming anew at the recollection "A white satin dress that I had so often, so very often, seen and made up in my dreams Perhaps it could have fitted better, but with her pretty figure everything looks well However, I remember that there was a fault somewhere near the shoulder that I could not correct It made her angry for a moment, just a little moment, she is so quick; but then good gracious! it is so natural to want to look one's best on such a day as that! Yet I was so nervous from having worked too hard those last few weeks, so as to get everything ready, that I was stupid enough to burst out crying Then the thought struck me, all of a sudden, that I ought to be happy, that I was happier than many others —more than many rich people, who in spite of all their money haven't what they want, for all my life I had wanted but one thing always the same one, and it happened that very morning"

To have an ideal and realize it is, in fact, a rare favor of fate, and we cannot pay too dearly for it, even were it to cost every drop of blood in our veins; but it seemed marvellous to me that this simple creature should have understood it I looked at her with respect, without daring to tell her how far she rose, in my eyes, above the vulgar diploma-winners who despised her, and she went on explaining things to me

"Of course my sister cannot see us, mother and me as often as she would like, she has so much to do, her school, first of all, and then obligations of all kinds, things that we have no means of understanding, having always led such a very different life from hers But I know very well that she thinks of us She even said to me the other day 'If you hadn't been there to take charge of mother, my marriage never would have come about' It is no doubt much easier to attend to one's family duties when everyone is not watching you, when you haven't a position to keep up Oh! she had so much judgment, and cleverness, and courage! You'll see how she'll succeed All I'm afraid of is that she'll wear herself out I cannot help her any more I am really of no use at all to her And that makes me feel that I am so lonely now! So awfully lonely!"

Coming back to the word that had been the artless and mournful lament of her childhood, Louise hid her face in her hands But almost immediately her poor needle-pricked finger brushed away a tear that would obstinately persist in starting, and she added, with her patient smile

"But how I rattle on! Excuse me. All this is no one's fault * * * It's just life"

MONTH AFTER MONTH a cold sticks, and seems to tear holes in your throat Are you aware that even a stubborn and long-neglected cold is cured with Allen's Lung Balsam? Cough and worry no longer

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Chats With Young Men

USEFUL THOUGHTS

Seek to be useful to all by your words and actions, but more especially by your prayers

If we delay doing penance until the last hour, it is very uncertain repentance, and seldom a sincere one

Take my word for it, it is not prudent to trust yourself to a man who does not believe in God and in a future life after death—Sir Robert Peel

Little children in their innocence, which is akin to the sanctity of God, are wiser than all their teachers, and have undertakings above their elders.

He listened to that most ethereal of all sounds, the song of crickets, coming in full choir upon the wind, and fancied that, if moonlight could be heard, it would sound just like that What is the voice of song when the world lacks the ear of taste?

Where true fortitude dwells, loyalty, bounty, friendship and fidelity may be found A man may confide in persons constituted for noble ends who dare do and suffer, and who have a hand to turn for their country and their friends Small and creeping things are the products of petty souls

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The brief synopsis which The Register has already published of the lectures of M Brunetiere in Italy brings the demand for a more adequate report M Brunetiere is to-day the intellectual leader of Catholic laymen, particularly the young men, to whom their religion is a matter of importance His attitude in the literary world is the attitude of every sincere, intelligent Catholic young man in whatever circle of life he may move.

The lectures of M. Brunetiere referred to have produced the most profound impression in Italy, and it would not be surprising if, together with his example, they initiate a return movement to Catholicism similar to that which is so marked in France. The French movement has already acted suits, as has been shown by the not-abroad, and produced practical results German Protestant literary man, Hans Fischer, in his "Die Hin zu Rom-Bewegung." He illustrated therein the conversion of the gifted but revolutionary Swedish poet, August Strindberg This was all the more timely as it appeared at the moment when the Protestants of Germany were chagrined to learn that Frau Gnauck-Kuhn, the leading women representative of the Protestant agitation in favor of Christian Socialism, whose addresses in past years at Protestant conferences had been re-echoed throughout the Protestant Church, had recently become a convert to Rome, and that she was anxious to publish in Protestant papers her reasons for this step.

Fischer, in discussing this movement, says substantially as follows "It is perfectly correct to speak of a movement toward Rome among certain classes of literary men of our day, and as is usual in the case of extreme and radical movements in literature this, too, has come via France, and this country has furnished the first and most noteworthy examples of the agitation Paul Verlaine probably the greatest of modern French lyric poets, shortly before his death found his way back to the fold of the only saving Church Huysmans, one of the most consistent and persistent writers of the naturalized school in France, even more pronounced in his naturalistic philosophy than Zola, has become a monk The genial humorist, Josephine Peladon, already for years, and especially in his fourteen volume novel cycles, 'La Decadence Latine,' preaches the gospel of a return to Rome as the only salvation for the Latin races Barbey d'Aureyvilly, who is highly esteemed in these literary circles, openly avows his preference for the same Church But the movement has overstepped the boundaries of France. The most recent converts from this class of writers have been Ola Hansen and the Swedish poet, August Strindberg, the great sceptic and eternal doubter, for many years the rabid protagonist of the most destructive ideas in religion, politics, and Socialism His character and conversion are typical of his Romeward movement Strindberg has in recent years attained a somewhat international reputation for the brilliancy of his poetical productions and for his bitter attacks on 'society,' 'marriage,' 'morals,' and other fundamentals of the present social fabric. In his remarkable work entitled 'Legends,' he tells us how he learned that the ideas of right and wrong were perfectly indifferent conceptions, and that morality was philosophically and practically nothing His career outwardly has been as varied as his inner development In the fifty years of his life he has been a public school teacher, an actor, a telegraph operator, a preacher, a newspaper man, an artist, a private tutor, a librarian and a chemist In some of his more recent works, such as 'To Damascus' and 'Before a Higher Judge,' he has shown some signs of sober reflection, and now this reaction has ended with his entrance into the Church of Rome"

How potent the principles at work in the movement are may be judged from the case of M. Francois Copper. He was for nearly fifty years one of the most unyielding infidels in France Going out of Catholicity in youth, he ran the gamut of the various Oriental cults only to lay them aside as unsatisfying, and to lapse into a confirmed Deist. His unbelief arose from egotism, or pride of intellect. In his work on Joan of Arc he tells of his return to the faith of his childhood "There was a time when I should have scornfully shrugged my shoulders at the mention of miracles. Yet, if there be an Almighty Being, the Maker of all things, visible and invisible, He must be superior to all these laws which He Himself impressed upon His work; and therefore no miracle can be impossible to Him. To-day I am no longer arrogant enough to overlook this obvious truth. A time came when I lay on what seemed likely to become my deathbed I looked into the grave; and I felt the craving for immortality. Then I set myself to read the Gospels once again. I read them as they ought to be read—with a simple open heart — and in every page, in every word of that sublime story, I saw truth shine. And consequently I now firmly believe in all the Gospel miracles, chronicled as they are, by the evangelists, with a clearness and minuteness of detail which afford the most evident proof of truthfulness. Yes, Jesus did give sight to the blind and life to the dead. As He passed on His brief journey through this world, He scattered these blessings by the way to show that He was indeed the Son of Man. Thus did He found the religion which during nineteen centuries has given peace to all men of good will. The faith in Him which I have now attained I hope henceforward to keep, and to see it constantly and steadily strengthening unto my life's end."

An influence which can work with such a result as this may be more easily under-estimated than over-estimated.

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Deposit Safes to rent. All sizes, and at reasonable prices.
Parcels received for safe custody.
Bonds and other valuables received and insured against loss.
Solicitors bringing Estates, Administrations, etc. to the Corporation are continued in the professional care of the same.
For further information see the Corporation's Manual

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