

What Shall I Ask in Prayer.

What shall I ask at close of day, When on my knees I sink to pray? For health and friends? There is no need For there are given in richest need.

The Sabbath Bells.

The cheerful Sabbath bells, wherever heard, Strike pleasant on the sense, most like the voice Of one, who from the far-off hills proclaims

SELECT STORY.

'BESSY HAY.

CONCLUDED.

You are very kind, he said, huskily. I had almost grown to regard you with distrust.

Van Brugh laughed, showing his dainty, pearl-white teeth under a brown moustache.

Never judge by appearances, he said. Take my word for it, Miss Hay will excuse all lack of ceremony when she learns all.

Mr. Van Brugh accompanied Paul to the railway station, and saw him off with a smilingly uttered profusion of good wishes.

The best friend a fellow ever had! thought Paul as the train moved off.

But he could not see the sardonic grin into which the curves of the farewell smile altered when the little country station was left once more to stillness and loneliness.

Now, said Norton Van Brugh, I shall have the field all to myself. Strange how fascinated I have allowed myself to become with a mere country girl!

Bessy Hay never answered Paul Estcott's farewell letter; nor did the latter once suspect that it was because Mr. Van Brugh never had delivered it.

Paul, firing up under the fevered impulse of his old enemy, jealousy, took refuge in silence. Nor did a long epistle from his aunt Jemima, which contained more news—possible, probable, and impossible—than any government bulletin, serve to cool the flames.

Folks say, wrote the epistolary spinner, that Eliza Hay is going to marry the widower, Sinclair, because he's rich. There was a deal of talk about her and that young Van Brugh, but he went away all of a sudden, folks thought it likely with a flea in his ear.

Eliza knows pretty well which side her bread is buttered on, and Sinclair can't live long with that cough of his.

It was no wonder, then, that when pretty Bessy Hay made an excuse to come to aunt Jemima's and asked wistfully and with a certain quiver in her voice if Paul's letter contained no message for her, the elderly gossip-monger answered:

Dear me, no! You didn't expect to hear, did you? Bessy went back home, her little heart as cold as lead in her bosom.

She had refused Norton Van Brugh; she said 'No' to Mr. Sinclair, in spite of aunt Jemima's knowing prognostications; and people began to wonder if pretty Bessy Hay was going to be an old maid after all.

Why doesn't he write to me, or send me at least a word to show that he has not utterly forgotten me? thought Bessy.

Why doesn't she answer my letter! thought Paul. So the world wagged on, until Mr. Estcott came home from the far off flowery land—not indeed with the for-

in a place as modest as his native village.

It was a stormy November evening, with threatenings of snow in the chill air, and a low wind stirring the last withered leaves upon the boughs, when he alighted at the station, looking almost into the eyes of Bessy Hay, who had come to the post office to ask once again for the letter that never came.

How seldom are our visions realized! Bessy had dreamed a thousand times of meeting Paul Estcott, but never in such a way as this.

Paul! she quavered. Ah! said Paul, doffing his stylish fur travelling cap, I hope you are well. For he did not exactly like to call her Mrs. Sinclair as yet.

The red stains of sunset had almost faded out of the sky when he overtook her about a hundred yards from the station.

His heart smote him when he saw the look of meek endurance on her face. Are you alone Bessy? Qes, Paul.

I suppose, he said, with an effort, that I must call you by some new name now?

Call me Bessy Hay, she answered, quietly. You are not married? No, Paul!

He drew a long breath that was almost like a sob. Aunt Jemima said—but, Bessy, why did you not answer my letter?

Why did you not write to me, Paul? Before they had reached the old Hay farm, where the currant bushes had long since lost their leaves, and the garden wall was already beginning to be whitened with the falling snow flakes, the mists of doubt and misunderstanding were all cleared up, and Bessy Hay had promised to forgive and forget all her lovers seeming neglect.

Van Brugh was a scoundrel, uttered Paul, but without his aid I could scarcely have been in a position to marry you! It has been a long time to wait; but it's all right, Bessy, after all.

It's like a story Paul, said Bessy, where people go through all sorts of trials and tribulations, but we are happy at the last! O Paul, I never thought I should live a story!

Dr. Golding.

In the year 1853, I was visiting a friend in the small town of Fairview, Virginia, when I was taken very ill with fever. A physician by the name of Dr. Gordon attended me, and nursed me kindly through my protracted sickness; and by his gentlemanly deportment, and skill as a doctor, he quite won my heart.

He was a married man, and I supposed him to be about forty years of age. He was portly and handsome, and a favourite with all who knew him. I was often struck with his great love for his wife; she seemed the all absorbing thought of his mind, and the topic on which he delighted to dwell.

I did not see Mrs. Golding during my stay at Fairview, though the doctor often told me that she would call on me as soon as I recovered my health. I remained at Fairview several weeks after I was quite well, but was disappointed that Mrs. Golding did not pay the promised visit.

Some years after I again visited Fairview; my old friend, the doctor was the first to welcome me. He frequently called as he passed in visiting his patients. One afternoon he called, and I remarked to Lizzie (my friend) that I had never seen the doctor in better spirits. He stopped only a few moments, as he said he was going to see a gentleman in the country, some miles from the town, and expected he should not be home before late at night. After he had gone, I remarked to Lizzie that I would not exchange the company of Dr. Golding for that of any young man I ever knew. She laughed, and said, I'll tell Mrs. Golding of that, and make her jealous, though some persons do not think she loves her husband very much. I laughed, and then the subject changed.

The next morning Lizzie ran into the room before I was dressed, exclaiming in a horrified voice, oh, Maggie! Dr. Golding is dead.

I looked at her for a moment, scarcely comprehending her, and cried, Impossible! and then added, Lizzie, it must be a mistake, for Dr Golding was here yesterday in perfect health; how can it be?

But she insisted that it was so, for her brother went to the post-office, and heard it there, and said all the town was in a commotion about it, and there could be no doubt of it.

When Mr. West (Lizzie's husband) came in to breakfast, he gave us all the particulars he could gather. They were these. Dr. Golding had returned home quite late, perhaps about ten o'clock; several persons saw him as he passed through the town, on his way home, Mrs. Golding had told all else that was known. They lived alone on

tune of which he had dreamed in such sanguine fashion, but with a sufficient competence to live well and comfortably the outskirts of the town, with only one servant. They had no children.

She had retired when he came home, and knew that he sat up writing for a short time after he came in, and supposed it was about eleven o'clock when he went to bed. She said that he complained of feeling very tired and not very well, but took no medicine (as is generally the case with doctors); and as she was sleepy, she thought nothing much of it, and they both soon fell asleep. After sleeping some hours, she was awakened by hearing him groan. She asked him if he felt worse, but received no answer, though she thought she heard him vainly trying to articulate. She rose and lit a lamp, and on approaching the bed saw him gasping for breath. She tried to lift him up, but in a moment he expired. She then ran, terrified, to summon the servant girl, but he was past all earthly aid.

The servant corroborated Mrs. Golding's statement so far as she knew. Doctors examined him, but found no traces of poison or foul play, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict of 'Died by some unknown disease.'

No one knew of his having any disease but it was ascertained on inquiry that his father had died of disease of the heart, and it was thought likely it was the case with him. This was all. He was buried with Masonic honours. But people did not seem satisfied, and whenever it was spoken of, they called it a great mystery.

In the same town lived Mr. King, a brother-in-law of Mrs. Golding's. Mrs. King, Mrs. Golding's sister, had died a year or two previous to the death of Dr. Golding; but Mr. King had never married again, nor, indeed, had he ever paid the slightest attention to any lady since. Mr. King was a wealthy lawyer, and his home was one of luxury. Dr. Golding was in only moderate circumstances, and their home was plain but neat.

Mrs. King had always been a delicate lady, and when their little Lena was a year old she died, leaving her infant in the care of Mr. Golding, her only sister. Mrs. Golding took the little girl to her own home, and lavished on her all the affection of a mother, for she had been denied the blessing of children, and she took the child to her heart at once. Dr. Golding's love for the child was scarcely less than that of his wife.

Mr. King lived alone in his own home attended only by his servant. He was very often away; but when at Fairview he devoted a great part of his time to his little daughter, who was a winsome little fairy.

I attended the funeral of Dr. Golding and there, for the first time, saw Mrs. Golding. She seemed perfectly overcome and stifled by her great trouble—moaning softly to herself, and when she raised her eyes, they had a bewildered, frightened look; as though she could scarcely comprehend her sudden bereavement.

Soon after all this happened, I returned home, and had almost ceased to think of it, when some eight months later or more Lizzie wrote me that Mrs. Golding and Mr. King was married!

This news astonished me, and shocked me scarcely less than that of Dr. Golding's death. Lizzie wrote me that no one suspected it until they were actually married; for all had been conducted so quietly. True, busybodies and gossips had predicted that they would make a match, as they thought it would suit both parties; but all were taken by surprise when it took place before even a year had elapsed, and while Mrs. Golding wore the deepest mourning. Lizzie added, Madam Rumour says that little Lena was the cause of the early marriage; for after the death of Dr. Golding, Mrs. Golding remained for some months in her own house, secluded from the world, with no companions save Lena, and a nurse and cook. But seven months after his death, she was obliged to break up and go to live with a brother residing in a distant State. Accordingly, she commenced preparations, but then came the difficulty. What was to be done with Lena? Mrs. Golding said she could never give her up, for she was all she had to love, and that her sister on her death-bed consigned her to her care; also, that Lena was so attached to her, that she refused to leave her. Mr. King said that he could not part with his only child, and that she must remain with him. And thus they compromised matters, so that both could retain their darling, by getting married.

And now Mrs. Golding moved from her modest cottage, to become the mistress of the handsomest establishment in Fairview; and when she changed her home, she seemed also to change herself. When the widow's robes were laid aside so also was the plain little lady, and she came forth the gayest of the gay, and one of the leaders of fashionable life. Seeing her now, no one would have recognised her as the plain Mrs. Golding of the cottage.

I met Mrs. King in my subsequent visits to Fairview, very frequently, but

did not fancy her much. She seemed too gay for one of her years, and who had been a widow. I remarked at times a kind of frightened, terrified look, where there was no seeming cause and if any one remarked it, she would say it was nervousness, that she had been so all her life, and hoped we would think nothing of it. Mr. King was always kind to his wife, but never loving, for his heart seemed bound up in Lena.

A few years of gaiety, and Mr. King became transformed, from a lady of fashion, to a perfect recluse, and it was rumored that she was deranged. She shut herself up at home, and refused to go out, or to see company. At first, her most intimate friends were received, and they said that she was undoubtedly insane; but they were soon forbidden to see her. For three or four months she remained thus; and then one morning her door was found locked, and no one could gain admittance. After a few hours Mr. King had the door forced and then Mrs. King was found on the bed, dead! By her side was a bottle of laudanum, and a written confession, saying that she had smothered Dr. Golding, by dipping a thickly folded cloth in water, and laying it on his face while he slept, and then placing a pillow over that, and holding it down until he was dead. What she had told when questioned she had invented. All this was done in order that she might marry Mr. King, and live in luxury and splendour. She laid well her plans, and carried them all out, but her elegance satisfied her not. She plunged into a vortex of gaiety to stifle conscience, and tried in vain to be happy.

The demon of remorse seized her, and she imagined that her guilt was written on her face to be read by all, and ere long she would be dragged from her home to suffer for her crime. So she determined to end her miserable life; but she could not even do that in peace until she wrote a confession of her guilt. Soon afterwards she was buried. Mr. King took Lena to Europe; and they have never since returned to America.

Thus was cleared up the mystery of Dr. Golding's death.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A gentleman whose wife has been ill for some time, came down town Saturday with a face longer than a revised charter. A friend who met him grasped his hand in fearful sympathy and murmured: Oh! when did she die? Oh, thunder! was the solemn reply, she ain't dead; she's cleaning house.

A Memphis man insisted on having new cabbage for supper the other night and cooked it himself, while his wife talked about the prevailing disease. Three hours after she was wondering whether she should wear black cashmere or bombazine for second mourning.

A negro in Columbia, Ga., dreamed that he found five dollars at a certain place in a street. He went to the spot next morning, found one dollar, and now he accuses the ghost who told him to go there of stealing the other four dollars.

A Milwaukee servant-girl, whose lover insisted on an early day for the wedding, had gathered together eighteen towels, fifty napkins, twenty sheets, three quilts, seven dresses, and several other articles when arrested.

It is of the first importance in undertaking any enterprise to form a correct idea of the end to be accomplished. Every occupation in life has some distinct purpose, and only as it is thoroughly kept in view can the efforts put forth prove successful.

THE STAR

—AND—

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