

UNTO DEATH.

Canvas!—you hear
A face false as the perjured air
He breathes. I lack a knife to cut thee through,
But fire will do!

This flame—I hold it high that I may see—
Will crisp the lips which seem to be
Moving to speak! This flame will blast
The proud face penciled out to last
When he is dead. Tier over tier
Old faces, good and bad, hang in the gallery here
Black with the crust of time; and you?
You would be here, I knew.

Why, I have managed well
To find thee, creeping through the dark. Tell
All thy proud looks out, for see, I reach—
Do thy false eyes beseech?
Eyes wonderful as false.
So wonderful, that faults
A little less might be forgiven: even the wise
Might trust such eyes!

How true they look! The brush spoke right
In giving to the lids that little droop, and quite
The air of dreams, so that one turns
To see where some fair vision burns.
Why, I dreamed with them once; dreamed, taking
False for true:
Dreamed, seeing things so new:
Dreamed—there! the light falls now
Just right, and tells me how
I came to think no face had ever been
So free from touch of sin—
I lack a blade to cut it shred from shred!
This weight I cannot lift above my head:
I cannot hold it up!

Why, I am strong, so strong—if I could reach some
Cool my lips, I might keep yet
The vow I made. My brow is wet:
My hands refuse to hold,
Shivering—not with cold!—
I lean against this shaft:
Sink lower to this stone—the eyes which laughed
So long ago in mine, laugh now. I lie beneath
The rapier in its painted sheath
Kept by his hand!
The stifled air, at his command,
Has mocked me. I will yet
Rise and be gone. Above, his eyes are set:
They waken, looking down:
They scorn me, scorn and frown:
Those eyes upon the wall
Behold me writhe and fall!

When I am found
Stark, stiff, and straight beneath the eyes which
frowned
He will, untold.
Know that *here* cannot grow cold.

AN INSURANCE COMEDY.

There was a heated discussion going on in one of the Equitable Life Insurance rooms, London. On presenting his claim for twenty thousand pounds for which the life of his late wife had been insured, what answer do you suppose Jack Dunstan received?

Perhaps, first, you had better be told something about Jack Dunstan. Three years ago, to the astonishment of all his fashionable friends, he had thrown up his commission in the Guards and sold his handsome person to a Scotch heiress of extraordinary wealth and hideousness. Perhaps the one life of Jack's life was the one uttered at the altar. In his favor be it urged that it was uttered to save his father from ruin and disgrace, and that to the day of her death, Jack was a devoted husband to his unloved bride. Dunstan, senior, managed—or mismanaged—the property of the married pair. All but the parties most interested saw that the old man's mind was totally unhinged; but Jack, ignorant as a child in business matters, firmly believed his father to be the sharpest, shrewdest man alive. And whatever Jack wished was right in his wife's eyes. Among other things, he had insured his daughter-in-law's life, Jack and she going through the necessary forms as he bade them. In the course of time Mrs. Dunstan died, and Jack claimed the insurance. Said the polite officer of the company, after hearing him out: "We prefer to give you another wife rather than pay the amount."

Dunstan told him, rather stiffly, that was not a subject to be joked upon.

"I am perfectly serious, Mr. Dunstan. Just cast your eyes over this policy. You will see that it gives us the option of replacing the loss. He paused for Jack to read the policy, and pursued, triumphantly: "Which is exactly what we propose to do. We think it will be cheaper for us, and, and—may I say—pleasing to you!"

"No, you may not!" snapped Jack. Then, I regret to say, he swore. "D—n, do you mean to say that after receiving twenty thousand pounds, all you are bound to do in return is to offer me the first woman you pick up?"

"Oh, my dear sir," deprecatingly, "we should not think of presenting any but a young lady of good birth and reputation."

"You are very kind," savagely.

"It was an unusual method of insuring, I admit, but the amount in question was so large and everything else so satisfactory, and Mr. Dunstan, senior, so determined, that we concluded to yield to his whim. Pray be calm, sir!"

But Jack could not be calm. When it was made clear to him that this was no practical joke, his anger knew no bounds. To appeal to the law was the last of his threats. It was, however, the only one which could be answered. The polite gentleman pointed out to him that he could not deny his own signature, nor his father's, nor his wife's.

"And no one can blame us, for we wrote you full information—"

"My father attended to all correspondence." "Our letter remaining unanswered, we sent a confidential clerk, instructed to find out whether these extraordinary terms were your ultimatum. You would not even see him. You referred him to Mr. Dunstan, senior."

It was too true. Jack was confounded.

"Nevertheless, he said, doggedly, "I do not believe it would stand in law. I should like to see the president of the company about it, sir."

The polite gentleman believed the president was engaged, but would inquire.

Left alone, Jack paced the room, mentally confounding his carelessness in intrusting such matters to his father's failing mind. So absorbed was he in his gloomy thoughts that he did not notice the door slowly open and the charming head of a young girl peep into the room. It was one of those delicious, babyish faces that seem made for love and laughter, with the bluest eyes man ever saw, and soft, red lips, that curved in a mischievous smile.

But when Dunstan suddenly turned the smile fled. The long lashes fell demurely, and in the gentlest voice imaginable, she "feared she must have entered the wrong room."

"Can I be of any service?" he asked.

"You are not Mr. Dunstan, are you?" timidly.

"I am," said Jack, feeling ready to deny his identity if it displeased her.

"If you are," pursued his fair visitor, quite calmly, "I am the person chosen to replace your wife."

"There is no necessity for replacing her," briefly.

"Must marriage always be a matter of necessity?" saucily.

Then she was aghast, for she saw that she had wounded a proud man to the quick.

Dunstan grew pale, and began in a quick harsh tone:

"If marriage was once a matter of necessity with me—"

"Oh! oh! I did not know—how could I! Pray, pray forgive me," she begged, with tears of real distress in her pretty eyes. "Oh, do not explain!"

But Jack would explain. And somehow her sweet sympathy led him on from one confession to another. He sketched his early life of gay luxury—that of a wealthy and popular man about town; the crisis in his father's affairs; the old man on the verge of ruin—and of insanity, for his losses affected his reason—disastrously impeding his son's assistance. "And, God knows, I could not help him," said Dunstan, sadly. "I could speak three languages. I could ride and shoot. I could hold my own at billiards or polo, but I knew nothing of business, and I was up to my ears in debt, and so—"

And so—Jack had married a woman some twelve years his senior, whose infatuation for him was an open secret, and her money had paid his debts and wound up his father's business honorably.

"I tried to do my duty to her," added Jack, simply, "and she was fonder of me than I deserved. But she knew, and every one knew, that I married her for her money, poor thing."

"If she loved you, and you were kind to her, I do not see that she was so much to be pitied," said his fair companion, earnestly.

Then Dunstan took her hand, gratefully. The young lady blushed. He kissed it. She blushed deeper.

"Will you not tell me," he asked, gently, "how you ever came in such a position, as this?"

Oh! for some probable and touching excuse! But it is hard for a girl to collect her thoughts when a handsome and interesting man persists in holding her hand and looking into her face, particularly if she is not used to lying.

"I am curious, I admit. Besides, I should like to help you if you will allow me. Can you not confide in me?" he urged.

At her wits' end, she broke out, confusedly: "Left a widow at an early age—"

"A widow? You?"

"Certainly. Why not?" defiantly, "with six small children and—and—oh!—and an aged mother dependent on me, I was ready to fall into the company's plans. Of course they pay me, and if—if—I had suited you, my future would have been assured. But, believe me, now that I know of your early sacrifice, I will be no party to forcing you into a second loveless marriage."

Dunstan had preserved an amused and incredulous silence; but to her last words, which seemed "those of truth and soberness," he answered, softly:

"Will you not?"

"Do not think so poorly of me. Besides, if you went to law about it, I am sure you would win your suit."

"I shall not go to law about it," he said, slowly. "I am thinking of accepting the company's terms."

"Will you authorize me to tell the president so?" eagerly.

"If you are satisfied as far as you are personally concerned."

"I am not personally concerned at all."

"What?"

"Surely you remember that you distinctly refused me. Please move from the door, Mr. Dunstan; I wish to go out."

"Not until you explain this comedy you have been playing."

There was a pause.

"Well," hesitating, "if I must confess, the president of this company is my father. I was in his private office when your affair was discussed. I wagered a gold bangle that I would get you to agree to his terms. Now, you are angry—I wish I had not told you! Oh, don't stare at me so, you make me nervous. I did not think you would take it like this. Do speak

to me! I only did it for a joke. You must admit the situation was funny." She laughed to think of it, and then there came a little sob in her voice. "But I would not have hurt your feelings for anything."

"You have done worse than that," said Dunstan, speaking at last.

"Bah! You are not in love with me!"

"I am not so sure of that. Ah, why did you let me think you might be my wife?"

The young lady stood with downcast eyes, flushing and paling.

"If I have done wrong," she faltered.

"You will try to repair it, will you not? You will give me a chance of winning you—unless, indeed, you are engaged, or feel sure you can never like me."

"I am not engaged," she faltered, "and I do like you—so far. And if you wish to try"—slipping her satin-smooth fingers into his "No! you may not kiss me. Wait till we are really engaged."

"I could not possibly wait!" cried Jack.

"Ah! somebody is coming in!"

Somebody came in—a fine-looking, elderly gentleman. He said:

"I think I should apologize for this mad-cap's freak, Mr. Dunstan. She twists me round her little finger or I should never have allowed—Bless me! Madge, what does this mean?"

"It means," said Miss Madge, blushing like a rose, "that you owe me a gold bangle, papa."

THE POETRY OF HOME.

I am very shy at venturing into your "Household" without an introduction, but seeing the kindness with which others have been received, I venture forward with a few remarks on the subject above named, for what subject has drawn forth more paths in poetry than home life and its associations? Coldest hearts have warmed, and cynical minds relaxed their sarcastic smiles for a richer glow, at the magical touch of home love.

Goldsmith, the warm-hearted Irishman, for whom, in spite of foibles, our hearts are touched with love, and who, midst all his "wanderings round this world of care," "boldly proclaimed the happiest spot his home," had in that large soul of his this well-nigh universal attachment quite as strong as any of us, perhaps more, for his must indeed have been love when we reflect how little he knew of real home comfort. We regret that his "hopes his latest years to crown," were not crowned with a brighter reality.

Save, the forsaken and dissipated son of the heartless Countess whose title came from our town, who says—

No mother's care
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer:
No father's guardian hand my youth maintained.
Called forth my virtues or my vice restrained.

wrote of an ideal mother as "queen of the people's heart:" how lofty an opinion! how wide and expressive!

Thomson, innocent, but lovable, speaks of a true household thus—

An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease, and alternate labor, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven.
These are the matchless joys of virtuous love.

And then proceeds even passionately to describe the progress of time over such a home!

Till evening comes at last, serene and mild—
When after the long vernal day of life,
Enamored more, as more remembrance swells
With many a proof of recollected love,
Together down they sink in social sleep;
Together freed their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.

Dear Thomson, your ideal is ours; your spoken thought has pre-defined ours; every line of your picture is poetry itself. But we cannot linger, though we fain would, over each phrase.

Home, home, sweet home!

The representative of the brightest star of the home firmament—Mrs. Hemans—says:

Bower of repose! when torn from all we love,
Thro' toil we struggle, or thro' distance rove;
To thee we turn, still faithful, from afar,
Thou, our bright vista, thee our magnet-star!
Unfettered thought still roves to bliss and thee!

"Bliss and thee!" Oh, the bliss of those days of childhood, the experience of "that mother's love" which Montgomery calls

The noblest, purest, tenderest flame,
That kindles from above,
Within a heart of earthly mold—
As much of Heaven as earth can hold.

How many can say with Mrs. Sigourney:

And if I'er in Heaven appear,
A mother's holy prayer,
A mother's hand and gentle tear
Have led the wanderer there.

Mother's love and father's loving admonitions! Would our after life had always such living guides.

Have you ever read richly pathetic poor Tom Hood's "Retrospective Review?" How thoroughly realistic it is—the hoop which "was an eternal round of pleasure;" "the top a joyous thing;" and how telling the sigh which follows:

But now these past delights I drop,
My head, alas! is all my top,
And careful thoughts my string.

And later:

Oh for the garb that marked the boy,
The trousers made of corduroy

Well inked with black and red;
The crownless hut, ne'er deemed an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
Repose upon my head.

Hood, large-hearted brother of all mankind, sweetest home poet, whose heart, on seeing "a child embracing its mother" gave an earnest admonition to all of us who have living mothers:

Oh, reverse her raven hair!
Although it be not silver-gray,
Too early death, led on by care,
May snatch save one dear lock away.

But, ah, we find our theme growing. The more we write the greater seems the unwritten; the farther we go in the land of poetry the wider seems the expanse of rich landscape, fragrant with the flowers of love, and I must rest. Perhaps, if your heart warms at these examples, and you appreciate them, I may sometime come again.

I am afraid I have, however, confined myself too strictly to our English poets, and with an apology I will close my gossip by a quotation from a charming little poem by one but lately gone home—Longfellow:

Stay, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
Home-keeping hearts are happiest,
For those that wander they know not where
Are full of trouble and full of care;
To stay at home is best.

Macclesfield, Eng.

EUTHRA TUCKER.

AN INVENTION FOR LADIES.

Ever since the days of Eve, a long-drawn veil has gone up from the heart of woman touching her frizzes, and she has passionately yearned for something that would prevent them uncrimping at inopportune times. In response to this touching popular want, behold a scientific American holding up to the delighted eyes of his countrywomen "a crimp protector for preventing the uncrimping of ladies' frizzes." It was Artemus Ward who once said of an illustrious American that every time an emergency arose he got up and "busted in the emergency's head." In view of this crimp-protector, who shall say that Ward's tribute to Washington is not equally applicable to the variety of scientific American under consideration? If this protector really protects we have no doubt that its patentee will come unto such wealth as to be moved to exclaim: "Let me make the crimp-protectors of a nation and I care not who does its plumbing." And then to think of women all over the civilized world speaking his name with gratitude and admiration, down through the ages until time and frizzes shall be no more.

A TENDER SPOT TOUCHED.

"I don't suppose you allow any one to go over the bridge yet," said a countryman, addressing one of the workmen on the East river bridge.

"Not yet," said the workman.

"Well, I thought I'd just like ter kinder walk up ter the top of the tower 'un look the thing over. I suppose you wouldn't mind—"

"No one allowed on any part of the bridge," said the workman.

"I've heard tell a good deal 'bout this bridge, and thought since I was a stranger in the city—"

"We have had too many people bothering us already," said the workman, "and the boss won't allow any more inside the gates."

"Well, that's kinder tough on a man what's come nigh onto seventy-five miles to see that bridge. Now, I expect you feel mighty high when ye get up there. Must be over 100 feet to the top of that big tower."

"Four or five hundred," said the workman.

"Do tell!" said the countryman. "Now I expect as I'd get giddy-like it I went up there. I don't mind rumm' the risk, though."

"Can't be done," said the workman. "Dead against orders."

"You don't happen to be a drinkin' man, do you?" asked the countryman, winking, and poking his hand into his pocket. "Cos if you do, I'd like to have you drink my —"

"You needn't expect to bribe us!" said the workman. "We're used to that sort of thing, and the best thing you can do is to dust right out."

"Dust what?"

"Get. Move on."

"When will you be ready to receive visitors, anyway?" asked the countryman.

"Not in months yet."

"Now that's too all-fired bad," said the countryman. "Afore I left hum, Eliza says she, 'Zekle, if you com' hum from York without crossin' that bridge, you hain't no husband of mine no more. It's your big chance to become famous in our village,' says she, 'an' you hain't got a drop of go or snap in ye, if you don't take advantage of it.' Now, stranger, be you a married man?"

"I am," said the workman.

"Then you can understand how I'm pl—"

"Go across," said the workman, stepping aside, and allowing the countryman to pass on the bridge.

USELESS FRIGHT.—To worry about any Liver, Kidney or Urinary Trouble, especially Bright's Disease or Diabetes, as Hop Bitters never fails of a cure where a cure is possible. We know this.