

# THE MIRROR

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## Select Poetry.

For the Mirror.

A VISION.

The thick darkness of the scene,  
The leafless trees and evergreen  
Aro shrouded;

Winds blow in hollow gusts around;  
The brooks in icy chains are bound:  
'Tis winter.

Though warmth pervades my feathered nest,  
The human mind, that will not rest,  
Is roving.

As witches who, with flowing hair,  
On broomsticks ride high through the air,  
I travel,

And, wafted on the hurrying breeze,  
I'm carried over trackless seas  
And deserts.

I visit mansions bright and fair,  
Abodes of poverty and care,  
Alternate.

Methought whilst in my dreamy flight  
There came to me in garments bright  
An angel.

Charmed with a countenance so bright,  
And voice so sweet, that with delight  
I followed.

Down by the dark deep water's side,  
Where winds blew high the ocean tide,  
He led me.

And tossed upon its heaving bosom, anon lifted  
High on its foaming billows, or sinking deep  
Down the dark yawning waters, was the quivering  
bark. Those tattered sails floated in the  
hurry breeze, the helm refusing to obey the  
touch of the affrighted mariner. What dark  
despair distorted every feature as the eye was  
raised heavenward; and methought I heard the  
prayers that ascended to Him who rules the  
deep—who said to the elements: "Be still,"  
and calmness reigned triumphant—yet he heard  
not. High blew the tempest: still more fierce,  
fiercely crowded the dangers.

Surprised, I turned to see  
And turned to meet the angel's gaze—  
"Why is it?"

"Thy human mind doth think it odd,"  
He said, "Thou wonderest why that God  
Don't answer.

Hast thou to learn he cannot err;  
Does faithfulness thy bosom stir,  
O mortal!

Then know He who created thee  
Has never willed that thou shouldst see  
All mysteries.

Be thou content, if 'tis God's will:  
Melt every riddle into Him,  
Confiding.

But wouldst thou with further soar,  
I'll show what will be to thee the more  
Mysterious."

Away we sped o'er trackless moors;  
We pass through silent streets and doors,  
Never pausing,

Till down a narrow dreary lane  
I spied a lonely cot. Again  
We lingered.

Fierce winds coursed round the shattered habitation,  
and shook, with angry grasp, the broken  
door and loosened casement. Within the scanty  
furnished room, and hovering o'er the few  
remaining coals, sat one whose sad and anxious  
face still bore the impress of angelic beauty.  
Softly sleeps the unconscious infant, folded in a  
mother's affectionate embrace. But list to the  
childish voice by her side, as she draws the tattered  
shawl more closely round the childish  
form: "Mother, why sigh and look so sad?  
You tell me Jesus rules above, and knows all  
things. Does He not see us now? Can He not  
us all protect, or take us to Himself?" The  
voice is hushed, and wild dismay spreads his  
dark veil o'er the soft features as the ear catches  
the sound of approaching footsteps. He enters,  
with bloodshot eyes and dilated nostrils, from  
whence issues the fumes of intoxication. Sure  
naught but rum's accursed delirium could nerve  
that parent arm to deal the murderous blow on  
the head of his defenceless daughter, or drag her  
who but a few years ago he had, in all the pride  
of noble manhood, at the altar sworn to love,  
protect and cherish, to the mercy of the elements  
without. She sinks, and at the door lies still  
and motionless: soon again that parent heart is  
roused to life's flickering palpitation at the feeble  
call of her chivering infant, and with faltering  
step she hastens still further from the sound of  
that once loved voice, now fraught with oaths  
and curses:

To peaceful comfort—calm, serene—  
My angel guide now changed the scene  
In beauty.

I now beheld a mansion fair,  
With grounds laid out with taste and care  
And comfort,

And bordered round with evergreen.  
There, o'er the lofty door, is seen  
The sign-board.

It tells, in gilded lines of gold,  
That "Here to all are liquors sold  
By license."

Returning from his nightly round  
To see that all is safe and sound  
About him,

The landlord takes his easy-chair  
And calculates, with smirking air,  
His profits.

The glowing coal before him burns,  
Shedding soft light o'er gilded urns  
And pictures;

The easement hung with crimson folds,  
That bid defiance to the cold.  
Of winter:

And covered in their downy bed,  
Soft pillows where to rest the head  
In comfort,

His children—rosy, plump and fair,  
With brow serene and free from care—  
Softly sleepeth.

For his apparent peace and joy  
There is of all this world's alloy  
Naught wanting.

Forgetting censure in the past,  
Again, with great amazement, I asked—  
"Why is it?"

Why should he who for mammon's gain,  
Hath caused such misery and pain,  
So flourish?

And worthy hearts neglected—left—  
Of worldly comforts all bereft—  
Why is it?"

The angel-spirit answered not,  
But calmly from his bosom drew  
A parchment.

I took the scroll with reverent awe,  
And when I'd looked there—  
"Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in  
the world. They increase in riches; they are  
not in trouble, as other men; neither are they  
plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out  
with fatness; they have more than heart could  
wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly  
concerning oppression: they speak loftily, and  
they say: How doth God know? and is there  
knowledge in the Most High?"

When I thought to know this, it was too painful  
for me, until I went into the sanctuary of  
Thou didst set them in their end. "Surely  
castest them down into destruction. How are  
they brought into desolation as in a moment!  
They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a  
dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou  
wakest thou shalt despise their image."

"'Tis the Lord, hath spoken."  
I turned the starting tear to hide.  
Then looked again; my angel guide  
Had vanished.

Onslow, Jan. 21st, 1868. A. S. K.

## Select Tale.

### A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS.

A LESSON FOR HUSBANDS.

Andrew Lee came home at evening from the  
shop where he had worked all day, and tired and  
out of spirits, came home to his wife, who was  
out of spirits also.

A smiling wife and a cheerful home—what a  
paradise it would be, said Andrew to himself, as  
he turned his eyes from the clouded face of Mrs.  
Lee, and sat down with knitted brow and cloudy  
aspect.

Not a word was spoken by either.  
Mrs. Lee was getting supper, and she moved  
about with a weedy step.

"Come," she said, at last, with a side glance  
at her husband.

There was an invitation in the word only;  
none in the voice of Mrs. Lee.

Andrew arose and went to the table. He was  
tempted to say an angry word, but controlled  
himself and kept silent. He could find no fault  
with the chop, nor the sweet home-made bread,  
nor the fragrant tea. They would cheer his  
inward man if there had only been a gleam of  
sunshine on the face of his wife. He noticed  
that she did not eat.

"Are you not well, Mary?"  
The words were on his lips, but he did not ut-  
ter them, for the face of his wife looked so repel-  
lant that he feared an irritating reply. And so  
in moody silence the twain sat together until  
Andrew finished his supper.

As he pushed his chair back she arose and  
commenced clearing off the table.

"This is purgatory," said Lee to himself, as  
he commenced walking the floor of their little  
breakfast room, with his hands thrust desperately  
away down his trouser pockets, and his chin al-  
most touching his breast.

After removing all the dishes, and taking them  
into the kitchen, Mrs. Lee spread a green cover  
on the table, and placing a fresh-trimmed lamp  
thereon went out and shut the door after her,  
leaving her husband alone with his unpleasant  
feelings. He took a long deep breath as she did  
so, paused, stood still for some moments, and  
then, drawing a paper from his pocket, sat down  
by the table, opened the sheet and commenced

reading. Singular enough the words upon which  
his eyes rested were:

"Praise your wife."  
This rather tended to increase the disturbance  
of mind from which he was suffering.

"I should like to find occasion for praising  
mine."

How quickly his thoughts expressed that ill-  
natured sentiment. But his eyes were on the  
page before him, and he read on.

"Praise your wife, man; for pity's sake give  
her encouragement. It will not hurt her."

Andrew Lee raised his eyes from the paper and  
muttered:

"O yes, that's all very well. Praise is cheap  
enough. But praise her for what? For being  
sullen, and making your home the most disagree-  
able place in the world?"

His eyes fell on the paper.

"She has made your home comfortable, hearty  
bright and shining, your food agreeable; for  
pity's sake tell her you thank her, if nothing  
more. She doesn't object to it, it will make  
her eyes open wider than they have for ten  
years; but if it will do her good for all that, and  
you, too."

It seemed to Andrew as if this sentence was  
written just for him, and just for the occasion.  
It was the complete answer to his question:

"Praise her for what?" and he felt it also as a  
rebuke. He read no further, for thoughts came  
too busy and in a new direction. Memory was  
convicting him of injustice towards his wife.

She had always made his home as comfortable  
for him as hands could make it, and had he of-  
fered the slight return of praise or commendation?  
Had he told her of the satisfaction he had known,  
or the comfort experienced? He was not able to  
recall the time or occasion. As he thought thus  
Mrs. Lee came in from the kitchen, and taking  
her workbasket from the closet, placed it on the  
table, and sitting down without speaking, began  
to sew. Mr. Lee glanced almost stealthily at  
the work in her hands, and saw that it was for  
him she was at work.

"Praise your wife." The words were before  
the eyes of his mind, and he could not look  
yet. He still felt moody and unforbearing. The  
expression of his wife's face he interpreted to  
mean ill-natured, and with ill-nature he had no  
patience. His eyes fell upon the newspaper that  
lay spread before him, and he read the sentence:

"A kind cheerful word spoken in a gloomy  
home, is the little rift in the cloud which lets  
the sunshine through."

Lee struggled with himself awhile longer. His  
own ill-nature had to be conquered first; his  
moody accusing spirit had to be subdued. But he  
was coming right, and at last got right as to  
will. Next came the question as to how he  
should begin. He thought of many things to  
say, yet feared to say them lest his wife should  
meet his advances with a cold rebuff. At last,  
leaning towards her and taking hold of the linen  
bosom upon which she was at work, he said, in  
a voice carefully modulated with kindness:

"You are doing that work very beautifully,  
Mary."

Mrs. Lee made no reply, but her husband did  
feel to observe that she lost almost instantly that  
rigid erectness with which she had been sitting,  
nor that the motion of her needle had ceased.

"My shirts are better made and whiter than  
those of any other man in the shop," said Lee,  
encouraged to go on.

"Are they?" Mrs. Lee's voice was low, and  
had in it a slight huskiness. She did not turn  
her face, but her husband saw that she leaned a  
little toward him. He had broken through the  
icy reserve, and all was easy now. His hand  
was among the clouds, and a few feeble rays  
were already struggling through the rift it had  
made.

"Yes, Mary," he answered, softly; "and I  
heard it said more than once, 'what a good wife  
Andrew Lee must have!'"

Mrs. Lee turned her face toward her husband.  
There was light in it, and light in her eyes.  
But there was something in the expression of  
the countenance that a little puzzled him.

"Do you think so?" she asked, quite soberly.

"What a question!" ejaculated Andrew Lee,  
starting up, and going around to the side of the  
table where his wife was sitting.

"What a question, Mary!" he repeated, as  
he stood before her.

"Do you?"  
It was all she said.

"Yes, darling," was his warmly spoken an-  
swer, as he stooped down and kissed her.

"How strange that you should ask such a  
question."

"If you would only tell me so, now and then,  
Andrew, it would do me good."

And Mrs. Lee arose, and leaning her face  
against the manly breast of her husband, stood  
and wept.

What a strong light broke in upon the mind  
of Andrew Lee. He had never given even to his  
wife the small reward of praise for all the loving  
interest she had manifested daily, until doubt of  
his love had entered her soul, and made the light  
around her thick darkness. No wonder that her  
face grew clouded, nor that what he considered

moodiness and ill-nature took possession of her  
spirit.

"You are good and true, Mary, my own dear  
wife. I am proud of you—I love you—and my  
first desire is your happiness. O, if I could al-  
ways see your face in sunshine, my home would  
be the dearest place on earth."

"How precious to me are your words of love  
and praise, Andrew," said Mrs. Lee, smiling up  
through her tears into his face. "With them  
in my ears, my heart can never lie in the shad-  
ow."

How easy had been the work of Andrew Lee.  
He had swept his hand across the cloudy horizon  
of his home, and now the bright sunshine was  
streaming down, and flooding that home with  
joy and beauty.

## THE WILL: AN IRISH STORY.

It was a little after midnight that a knock  
came to the door of the cabin. I heard it first,  
for I used to sleep in a little snug basket near  
the fire; but I didn't speak, for I was frightened.

It was still repeated louder, and "then came a  
cry: Con O'Connell; Con, I say; open the door!  
I went 'you. I knew the voice well; it was  
Peter McCabe's; but I pretended to be fast  
asleep, and snored loudly. At last my father  
unbolted the door, and I heard him say, O, Mr.  
Heter, what's the matter; is the old man worse?"

Faith that's what he is, for he's dead!  
Glory be his bed! when did it happen?"

About an hour ago, said Peter, in a voice that  
even I, from my corner, could perceive was  
greatly agitated. He died like an old hathen,  
Con, and never made a will!

That's bad, said my father, for he was always  
a polite man, and said whatever was pleasing to  
the company.

It is bad, said Peter, but it would be worse if  
he couldn't help it. "Listen to me now, Corney;  
I want ye to help me in this business; and here  
are five guineas in gold if ye do what I bid ye.  
You know that ye were always reckoned the  
image of my father, and before he took ill ye  
were mistaken for even worse every day of the  
week."

Anan! said my father; for he was getting  
frightened at the notion, without well knowing  
why.

Well, what I want is for ye to come over into  
the house and get into the bed.

Not beside the corpse? said my father, trem-  
bling.

By no means, but by yourself, and ye're to  
stand by my father, and that ye want to  
make ye will before ye die; and ye're to stand  
for the neighbors, and Billy Scanlan the  
master, and ye'll tell him what to write, leaving  
all the farm and everything to me—ye under-  
stand. And as the neighbors will see ye and  
hear yer voice, it will never be believed but it  
was himself that did it.

The room must be very dark, says my father.  
To be sure it will; but have no fear. Nobody  
will dare to come nigh the bed, and ye'll only  
have to make a cross with yer pen under the  
name.

And the priest? said my father.

My father quarrelled with him last week  
about the Easter dues; and Father Tom said  
he'd not give him the rites; and that's lucky,  
now. Come along, now, quick, for we've no  
time to lose; it must be all finished before day  
breaks.

My father did not lose much time at his  
toilet, for he just wrapped his big coat round  
him, and slipping on the brogues, left the house.  
I sat up in the basket, and listened till they  
were gone some minutes; and then, in a costume  
as light as my parent's, set out after them to  
watch the course of the adventure. I thought  
to take a short cut, and be before them; but by  
bad luck I fell into a bog-hole, and only escaped  
drowning by a chance. As it was, when I  
reached the house the performance had already  
begun.

I think I see the whole scene this instant be-  
fore my eyes as I sat on a little window, with  
one pane, and that a broken one, and surveyed  
the proceedings. It was a large room, at one  
end of which was a bed, and beside it was a  
table with physic bottles, and spoons and tea-  
cups; a little further off was another table, at  
which sat Billy Scanlan, with all manner of  
writing materials before him.

The country people sat two and sometimes  
three deep round the walls, all intently eager  
and anxious for the coming event; Peter himself  
went from place to place, trying to smother his  
grief, and occasionally helping the company to  
whiskey, which was supplied with more than  
accustomed liberality.

All my consciousness of the deceit and trick-  
ery could not deprive the scene of a certain so-  
lemnity. The misty distance of the half-lighted  
room; the highly-wrought expression of the  
country people's faces, never more intensely  
excited than at some moment of this kind; the  
low, deep-drawn breathings, unbroken save by a  
sigh or a sob; the tribute of affectionate remem-  
berance to some lost friend, whose memory was thus  
sensibly brought back; these were all so real that,

as I looked, a thrilling sense of awe stole over  
me, and I actually shook with fear.

I low faint enough from the dark corner where  
the bed stood seemed to cause even a deep  
stillness; and then, in a silence where the buzz-  
ing of a fly would have been heard, my father  
said—

Where's Billy Scanlan? I want to make my  
will.

He's here, father, said Peter, taking Billy by  
the hand, and leading him to the bedside.

Write what I bid ye, Billy, and be quick; for  
I haven't a long time before me here. I die a  
good Catholic, though Father O'Rafferty won't  
give me the general rites.

A general chorus of muttered O! masha,  
masha! was now heard through the room; but  
whether in grief over the sad fate of the dying  
man, or the unflinching severity of the priest, is  
hard to say.

I die in peace with all my neighbors and all  
mankind.

Another chorus of the company seemed to ap-  
prove their characteristic expressions.

I bequeath unto my son Peter—and never was  
there a better son, or a decenter!—have you  
that down? I bequeath unto my son Peter the  
whole of my two farms of Killimundoney and  
Knocksheboora, with the fallow meadows behind  
Lynch's house, the forge and right of tithing  
the Dooran bog. I give him—and much more  
may it do him—Lanty Cassara's acre, and the  
Luary fields, with the lime kiln; and that re-  
minds me that my mouth is just as dry. Let me  
taste what ye have in the jug. Here the dying  
man took a very hearty pull, and seemed con-  
siderably refreshed by it.

Where was I, Billy Scanlan? says he; O, I  
remember; at the lime kiln. I leave him—  
that's Peter, I mean—the two potato gardens at  
Noonan's Well; and it is the elegant crops grow  
there.

Ain't you getting weak, father darlin'?

Peter, who began to be afraid of his father's  
loquaciousness; for, to say the truth, the punch  
got into his head, and he was greatly disposed to  
talk.

I am Peter, my son, says he; I am getting  
Ah! Peter, Peter, my lips again with the jug.

No, indeed, father, I watered the drink.  
You, says Peter; and at it's the taste; you  
compassionate pity murther a man in the cabin.

Well, I'm nearly done now, says my father;  
there's only one plot of ground remaining, and I  
put it on you, Peter, as ye wish to live a good  
man, and to mind my last words to ye here.

Now, Peter, are the neighbors listening? is  
Ain't Scanlan listening?

Yes, sir, says father, we're all minding,  
obeyed the audience.

Well, then, 's my last will and testament,  
and may—give me the jug—here he took a long  
drink—and may that blessed liquor be poisoned  
to me if I'm not as eager about this as every  
other part of the will; I say, then, I bequeath  
the little plot at the cross roads to poor Con  
O'Connell, for he has a heavy charge, and is an  
honest and as hard-working a man as I ever  
knew. Be a friend to him, Peter dear; never  
let him want while ye have it yourself—think of  
me on my deathbed whenever he asks ye for any  
trifles. Is it down, Billy Scanlan?—the two  
acres at the cross road to Con O'Connell and his  
heirs in *secla seclorum*? Ah! Blessed be the  
saints! but I feel my heart lighter after that,  
says he—a good work makes an easy conscience.

And now I'll drink all the company's good  
health, and many happy returns—

What he was going to add there's no saying;  
but Peter, who was now terribly frightened at  
the lively tone the sick man was assuming, hur-  
ried all the people into another room to let his  
father die in peace.

When they were all gone Peter slipped back  
to my father, who was putting on his brogues in  
a corner. Con, says he, ye did it all well; but  
sure that was a joke about the two acres at the  
cross.

Of course it was, Peter, says he; sure it was  
all a joke, for the matter of that. Wop't I  
make the neighbors laugh hearty to-morrow  
when I tell them all about it!

You won't be mean enough to betray me?  
says Peter, trembling with fright.

Sure ye wouldn't be mean enough to go  
against yer father's dying words? says my fa-  
ther; the last sentence ever he spoke; and here  
he gave a low, wicked laugh, that made myself  
shake with fear.

Very well, Con! said Peter, holding out his  
hand; a bargain's a bargain; yer a deep fellow  
that's all. And so it ended, and my father slip-  
ped over the bog, mighty well satisfied with the  
legacy he left himself.

And thus we came the owner of the little  
spot known to this day as Con's Acre.

FAMINE IN ALGERIA.—A frightful famine, re-  
miniscent of that which devastated Orissa  
last year, is now present ravaging Algeria. The  
"Echoes of ten natives who died of hunger  
were found at Mascara. On the following day  
thirty-three perished in a like manner; and on the  
fourteen submitted to their co-religion-  
aries, who only submitted to this duty under  
blows. The total number of victims in three  
days was forty seven."