

## AKIN TO LOVE.

BY ALFRED PERCIVAL GRAVES.

"Have you met a maiden fair  
Roaming through the forest shady?"  
"Many a maid I've met with there."  
"Nay, but none to match my lady."

"If you be the lady's love,  
Show—for who could show me better—  
By what signs I most may prove  
If mine eyes have missed or met her."

"Nay, I said not she loved me,  
Howsoever much I love her,  
Though none else may unto thee  
Her by surer signs discover.

"'Neath a golden wealth of hair  
Laugh the blue eyes of my Phyllis;  
Her red lips like roses rare,  
Wreathed around a row of lilies.

"Clad in she in virgin white,  
And she tripped across the valley,  
Singing light, until my sight  
Lost her in yon leafy alley."

"Such a maid methinks I met  
Underneath the forest shady—  
Such a maid methinks—and yet  
Scarcely all in all thy lady."

"Now, what mean you, I implore?"  
"Said you not your Phyllis pretty  
Fled along the flowery floor,  
Trolling out some mirthful ditty?"

"But the maid I met but now  
Leant, with lips for grief a-quiver,  
On a fallen beechen bough  
O'er the margin of the river;

"Her soft arms most sadly laid  
O'er that branch that bridged the  
river;  
Graven on whose rind I read,  
'If lovers never, friends for ever!'"

"Nay, then, so your tale be truth,  
With the dearest joy you move  
me;  
If her scorn be turned to ruth,  
Phyllis at the last may love me."

## LAME HETTY.

I am the foreman in a large hostler's establishment in New York. I am forty years old, and I never was particularly handsome to look at. I don't suppose my manners are especially fascinating either, for the girls mostly call me, as I am given to understand, "Old Crusty" and "Bear." Not that I mean to be cross, but some people haven't the agreeable ways of others.

I have sat behind the tall desk in Tape and Buttonbell's nineteen years. I've seen a good many curious phases of life within that time; but the most curious of all happened to myself personally—and that is precisely what I am going to tell you about.

"I wouldn't have had it happen for five dollars," said Dennison.

Dennison had charge of the out-of-doors department; and he came in, on that wet, drizzly February evening, to stand by the cheerful fire in my room. We had not lighted the gas yet; the press and hurry of work were over for the day, and it was very quiet and pleasant in the red shine of the fire. I was sitting on my tall stool, biting the feather end of a quill pen, and thinking—thinking of I scarce know what.

"What has happened now?" said I.

"It's Lame Hetty," replied Dennison. "Two rolls of work missing, and Hetty declares she brought 'em here."

I laid down the goose-quill Lame Hetty had been in my thoughts, somehow, all that rainy twilight, just as people and things will take possession of your brain at times, and you can't help yourself. A soft-eyed, low-voiced girl, who walked with a crutch, and always wore delicate grays and dove colors. I knew her from the throng because of the "tap tap" of her crutch, and used always to speak to her when I saw her standing in the long line of girls who waited, on Saturday night, to deliver their work and receive their pay.

"That's bad," said I.

"Ten dollars' worth of shirts," said Dennison—"order shirts, too, and that makes it worse. I'm sorry for the girl; she had a pretty face of her own, and I always liked her; but of course it's necessary to stand by rules. Loses her deposit, and no more work."

"But suppose she pays for the missing work?"

"It isn't likely she'll do that," said Dennison. "This sort of girl seldom has ten dollars saved up."

"I don't believe it's her fault, Dennison," insisted I.

"She is responsible, isn't she?"

"Yes, but—"

Just then Mr. Buttonbell came in, with a great order in his hand from a New Orleans house. I looked at it.

"We shall have a tight pull of it, sir, to execute this," said I, dubiously.

"But it must be executed," said he. "Put on all your hands. Turn on a full head of steam. It won't do to let Peck and Pattison go to any other place."

And he bustled away.

"Very unfortunate," said Dennison. "Lame Hetty was one of our best hands."

Hetty Dorrance came the next morning, as usual, to receive work; and she had a ten dollar bank-note in her hand.

"Some kind friend has sent me this to pay for the lost rolls of work, sir," said she to me.

"You're in luck, Hetty," said I, frowning over a long volume of figures, and trying not to blush under the earnest look of her soft brown eyes.

"And I'm much—oh, so much obliged to him, whoever he is," she added, in a low tone. "But I can't use it unless—unless you think I am innocent."

"Of course I do," said I, looking up at the

"I would stake my honor that she is not the Mr. Jones," said I, hotly.

"Well," retorted the old man, cautiously, "it's necessary to curtail the list a little, and it may as well be Hetty as any one."

But Hetty Dorrance never came to learn her doom. Day after day went by, and the familiar tap of her crutch sounded no more on the floor. I grew uneasy.

"Perhaps she is ill—alone—in want!" I thought.

And the more I pondered on the matter, the more uneasy I felt.

"Perhaps she is dead!"

And with that last, overwhelming thought came the full revelation of my own heart.

I had grown to love Hetty Dorrance.

Well, why not? I could afford a wife as well as most men. Hetty was only a work-girl, and lame also; but she had a face like one of heaven's angels, and a heart as white as a lily. Of that I felt certain. I loved her; why should I not marry her?

So I sat down and wrote her a little note, saying simply that I loved her, and asking her if she could consent to become my wife; and I concluded by saying that I would call on the morrow to receive her answer.



"ON A FALLEN BEECHEN BOUGH."

quiver of her voice. "I don't believe you would take a pin, Hetty. I've known you for four years, and I believe you are a good girl. It's an awkward mistake somewhere; but there's not many mistakes, my girl, but what Heaven clears up in its own good time. Now take your place in line; there's no time to be lost this morning."

So the matter was settled; but somehow a cloud rested on Lame Hetty. Those who had been fast friends before avoided her now; the coarser-minded whispered and giggled when the "tap tap" of her crutch sounded on the floor.

"Oh, Mr. Harvey," said poor Hetty one day, when Jenny Warren, the proudest and prettiest of our work girls, had declined to respond to her modest bow, "It's very, very hard to bear."

"Wait, Hetty; only wait," said I, cheerily.

"But it is breaking my heart," said she.

"They all think I am a thief!"

"I don't, Hetty."

"I know that, sir. I should drown myself, if at least one person in the world didn't believe that I was innocent."

The winter wore itself away. The busy season was succeeded by one of comparative dullness; and among the hands struck off the list was Hetty Dorrance.

"Once a thief, always a thief," said old Jones, the cutter. "I'd just as soon that girl shouldn't work for us."

Just as I had sent my letter off, there came a knock at the door.

"Mr. Harvey, are you alone? Can I speak to you for one moment?"

"Is that you, Helena Arden? Why, I thought you were married and gone to California!" I cried.

"I am married—to a spendthrift and a villain!" said she, with a little, hoarse laugh; "and I am going to California to-morrow; but I wanted to say a word to you first. I wanted to pay you for something."

"For what?"

"That roll of work which people accused Hetty Dorrance, the lame girl, of taking."

"Helena! Did you take it?"

"Yes," she cried, recklessly. "I took it! I wanted money sorely then; the landlady wouldn't let me have my trunks to be married until I paid her what I owed her. I was standing by Lame Hetty that evening. I saw her lay the piles of work on the desk; I saw them slip and fall off the heap. I was just going away, and it was an easy thing for me to stoop, as if for my own pocket-handkerchief, and pick them up. I pawned them, thinking I could easily redeem them; but I never did. Here is money to pay for them. I hope Hetty was not blamed."

"She was, though," said I, slowly.

"I can't help it," said Helena, flightily. "I've done my best. Will you see that she is righted?"

"As far as I can."

And Helena went away, muttering to herself something about all her accounts being closed at last. I paid but little attention to it at the time, but I remembered it afterwards.

I went the next evening to Hetty's simple lodgings, over a baker's shop.

"Miss Dorrance!" said the baker's wife, coming out of a back room, with a baby in her arms. "Why, didn't you know? She moved away."

"Moved! And my letter?"

"We got a letter here yesterday, sir, and we forwarded it to her. No. 36, Avenue Square, sir."

So I went to No. 36, Avenue Square—a little gem of a brown stone house, all bay-windows and balconies, standing in its own grounds; and there was Hetty at the casement, watching for me.

"Hetty," said I, "did you get my letter?"

"Yes, Mr. Harvey."

"And what is your answer?"

"That I will be your wife, Mr. Harvey, and that I am—oh, so thankful to have gained a good man's love!"

I stooped and kissed her daisy face.

"I suppose you are working here, Hetty?" said I. "It is a handsome house."

"No," said Hetty, half laughing and half crying. "I live here."

"Hetty! You!"

"My great-uncle died," said Hetty. "He was an old bachelor, and hated us all; but he couldn't take his money with him. I have inherited his fortune."

"It cannot be possible," said I, rubbing my forehead.

"But it is possible," said Hetty. "And it is true. I was just going to send to you to pay that ten-dollar bank-note back, when I got your letter."

"I have been paid, my girl," said I; and I told her about Helena Arden.

The next day we saw a little paragraph in the papers, how an unknown woman, with the words "Helena Arden," written on her pocket-handkerchief, had drowned herself at the foot of one of the crowded East River piers.

That is my story. It is simple enough; and yet, I think, it has the elements of romance in it.

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