

THE FAIREST GIRL IN TOWN.

She's as lovely as the flowers
That within our garden grow,
With her cheeks like blushing roses
And her teeth like lily's snow;
She has flowing raven tresses
And her gentle eyes are brown,
Oh! she is a perfect picture—
And the fairest girl in town.

I met her very often
As she passed me on my way,
And I felt a thrill of pleasure
When her eyes to mine would stray;
Till one well-remembered morning
Meeting her with farmer Brown,
I obtained an introduction
To the fairest girl in town.

She was ever in my vision
Let me turn which way I would,
And I vowed that nought should part us
Till we at the altar stood;
So, one pleasant summer evening,
When the stars smiled softly down,
I did gently "pop the question"
To the fairest girl in town.

First she blushed and then she sim-
pered
That she "re-ely didn't know,"
That I "quite sur-sur-surprised her,"
That I "was her first man-beau;"
Then she stammered—while I waited
With a lover's anxious frown,
That she "would consult the parents"
Of the fairest girl in town.

When I called on Sunday evening,
I was met by her dear "ma,"
Who informed me that her daughter
Had permission asked of "pa;"
How he raved and threatened rashly
That no farmer—poor and brown—
Should unite his earthly fortune
With the fairest girl in town.

Then, with heart filled to overflowing
I departed from the place,
Yet a purpose, strong, enduring,
Lent a vigor to my pace;
For I caught a glance—in passing
From the house—of eyes so brown,
And a smile bade me still cherish
One, the fairest girl in town.

Years have passed since that sad
morning,
And earth's changes onward rooled,
I have seen her haughty father
Lose his vessels and his gold;
I have watched and I have waited
Through the sunlight and the frown,
And I'm now the happy husband
Of the fairest girl in town.

CARRIE BERTRAM;
OR,
How a Heart was Healed.

It was night, and the wharf of Leith was crowded by many busy forms. A vessel was about to depart for Hamburg. Those who intended to be passengers were getting their luggage on board and saying their farewells; those who came to see their friends set sail were stumbling about in everybody's way, while the shouting and swearing of porters and seamen, the barking of dogs, the rattle of vehicles and the puffing of steam, made noise enough to drive any one mad.

By the dim lights might be seen a couple wandering up and down in earnest conversation, apparently quite heedless of the noise and bustle around them. They might easily have been seen to be lovers about to part for the first time, they were so young, and, one might add, so foolish-looking; but if they were, what couple has not been foolish?—and surely such behaviour is much less reprehensible in young people than in those of mature years. Lovers they were then, and fond foolish lovers too, over the fair landscape of whose lives had hitherto come no shadow. Friends and parents had smiled upon their betrothal, and if ever the course of true love seemed destined to run smooth, it was in their case. The parting which was about to take place was expected to be one of but short duration—a year or two at most. The young gentleman, who was a medical student, was going to Leipzig with the intention of completing his studies there, and gaining a little experience from foreign travel before commencing practice in his native city. His tall form bent gracefully towards the girlish figure of his sweet Carrie, as he was ever calling her, along with numerous other pretty epithets. She was clinging confidently to his arm, and with earnest upturned face, was, with a woman's pertinacity, extracting innumerable vows of constancy from lips that, while they vowed, curved with an involuntary smile of cynicism.

"Steuart," she said, and there were tears in her eyes while she spoke, you will not forget me in the busy German town?"

"Forget thee! Bid the forest birds forget thee! Bid the sea forget to swell beneath the moon."

Oh Steuart, said the young girl, don't talk such nonsense to me now, please; you know I would rather have a plain direct answer of your own than all the quotations in the world.

Very well then, my little dear, said the rather crestfallen young man, I prom-

ise you I shall, until the moment of my departure, speak to you in a language you can understand.

Thank you for the compliment, was the quick retort; but hitherto I have not found myself unable to understand your stage quotations; the fault is, I do not appreciate them.

There was a slight touch of pique in the tones of both as they spoke their last sentences, and they seemed on the very verge of that novel thing to them, a quarrel, when the third bell rang, and Caroline's uncle came rushing forward, puffing and panting, and scarce able to contain his wrath against the young man, whom he had believed to be aboard.

Man Steuart, are ye daft, dawdlin' your time awa' there when the boat's gaun aff? he cried, nearly choked with his vehemence, at the same time pulling the reluctant youth by the arm.

Steuart was loth to go, feeling that he had offended Carrie; but there was no time for explanations; so he bade her adieu in a quick, hard, constrained manner, imprinted a single kiss upon her cheek, and was gone. And this was their parting.

With a tearful cry, Carrie sprang from her dark retreat towards the side of the wharf; she could not let him go thus; but already the gangway had been withdrawn, the ropes unloosed, and she only came forward in time to hear the first uncertain turns of the paddlewheels as the vessel moved away into the Frith. She stood and watched it go further and further into the darkness, till its coloured lights gradually faded from view, and mystery enveloped the vessel which was freighted with what she loved best on earth.

Well, Carrie, if I have not indulged you this night against my inclination, and even conscience, my name's not Donald Inglis, said her uncle's voice close by her.

Oh uncle, she said, I like so much being out in the dark, and hearing the splash of the sea, and watching the lights of the vessels, and—

Come, nae nonsense now, said he; would ye like to stay out a' night? If ye would, I'll hire some o' the sailors to tak charge o' ye, for I'm tired walking ahint ye while ye indulge your sentimental whims.

Oh uncle, I am so sorry! said Carrie; I never thought of your catching cold; indeed I forgot all about everything.

Just the way wi' young lasses in love, he replied; but ne'er heed about me catchin' cauld; men that hae wintered on the borders o' the Black Sea mauna think aught o' this—it's yoursel' I'm feart for, my woman. What wad your mother, my puir dead sister, hae thoct, taeken I wad let ye rin sic risks! Come awa, here's the cab.

With a last seaward look she obeyed; and, except for one or two assurances to her uncle that she had not caught cold, she drove home in perfect silence.

During the few minutes that Carrie sat in the dining-room, before retiring to her own room, her uncle made some joking remarks about her absent lover, but they received no response; and shortly after, when she rose to bid him good-night, she flung herself upon the honest old soldier's neck, and burst into tears.

It seemed all natural enough,—the girl was excited and nervous; so, with a few consolatory prophecies regarding the future of Steuart Kerr, he dismissed her, with strict injunctions to go to bed and sleep, and rise on the morrow with the lark.

She went to bed, but not to sleep, and the larks arose and sang, but she lay still; she had caught no cold, had no malady, but she was very weary. Her heart was heavy, and she had no one to whom to unburden it. Oh for my mother! Oh for a sister! she would cry in the lonely hours of the sleepless night. She thought over every word she had said to Steuart, and wondered what had possessed her when she taunted him at their very parting hour.

Certainly he, too, had taunted her, with not being able to understand his poetical allusions, and she could not suffer that. Sometimes angry at herself, sometimes at him, and having nothing to distract her thoughts, she made a miserable time for herself.

At first she resolved, in the gentleness of her nature, to write a letter, asking forgiveness; then her pride revolted at the idea of making herself so humble about such a paltry affair, more especially when he was as much to blame as she. Those hateful stage quotations! Why would he always woo her with them rather than with simple, honest, words? They maddened her; and to say she did not understand them, why, the one to ask forgiveness was Steuart. At any rate he would never say again that she could not understand such trumpery, and call her his dear, unsophisticated little Carrie; no, she determined that the ravings in her heart after literature and art, which were ever cropping up, should be satisfied by nourishment, and that when he came back from Germany he should be more amazed at her progress than she at his.

It was a grand resolve, and one that filled her with such enthusiasm that she

could not rest in bed, so she rose and commenced at once. Her uncle had a good library, left to him by a literary brother; plenty of instructors were to be had in Edinburgh, near which city they resided; and she was free to do as she chose.

With pretty large experience, though not much learning, old Donald Inglis thought his niece a perfect paragon of accomplishments, and scoffed at the idea of her attending classes again like a school-girl; but he was soon persuaded into acquiescence when Carrie set herself to the task of coaxing; and before a few days had passed, she was resolutely performing her little railway journeys into the city, and attending classes and lectures with quite the air of a person who meant to learn. There was to be no skipping of lessons and cheating of masters now; she had a grand object in view, and she determined to carry it out.

CHAPTER II.

Steuart Kerr had no sooner jumped on board the Hamburg steamer than he wished he had bidden a kinder adieu to Carrie. He had fully intended to have made some apt quotations about leaving her in sorrow, or about the anchor being weighed; but the little "mix" had been cross, and had made him cross too. Poor thing! he thought, no wonder then that she was cross; for there's no saying when I may be back, or how my mind may be changed by travel. After which sage reflections this self-satisfied young gentleman decended to the saloon, where shortly afterwards he got a little of the conceit taken out of him by some roystering young men assembled there to drive dull care away.

So while the fair Caroline was standing on the wharf in the cold starlight, gazing after the vessel which contained her treasure, that treasure, instead of sentimentally pacing the deck alone, dreaming of her as she fondly imagined him, was consoling himself with hot brandy and water and making stage quotations by the yard. This was a habit he was much addicted to, being a young man of shallow brain but fluent tongue. His father was a medical man of high standing and large practice, and having consequently little time to spend with his family, had paid but little attention to his son's acquirements. His mother, a delicate woman of that weak nature that could never trust herself, doted on her family, and was particularly proud of her eldest son, Steuart, and of the pretty heiress whose affections he had been fortunate enough to win. His fancy for Caroline Bertram was a thing of some years' standing—a boy and girl affair, as the old people called it. He was now scarce twenty-one, but having had a set of companions older than himself he had gained quite a manly air. He was handsome and correct in his style, though there was a great weakness about his eyes and mouth, inherited from his mother. Had this weakness of character not been expressed in his face, ere long the observer would have discovered it either in his actions or conversation. Even during his short sea voyage to Hamburg it made itself very evident, to the amusement of his fellow passengers. At first, the weather being pleasant and the wind favourable, he thought seriously that he would like to change his profession and become a sailor; that a home upon the deep suited his temperament; but a thunder storm cured him; and, arrived on "terra firma," he was very glad to proceed at once to Leipzig, the scene of his future studies, and forget all about a home upon the deep.

Being of rather a social nature, Steuart soon made plenty of friends at the university, among whom was a divinity student of wonderful talents, but quiet, retiring manners. How he ever became acquainted with such a person must be explained, more especially as there are circumstances connected with their first meeting which bear strongly upon Steuart Kerr's after life.

One evening at dusk, walking through a part of the city where the traffic was very great, Steuart heard among the mingled noises the sharp cry of a female in distress. Rushing into the middle of the street, where the cabs and other vehicles had come to a sudden stand, he discovered a young lady lying in the mud among the feet of a cab-horse. The driver had stopped the animal just in time to save the lady's life, and Steuart, with the aid of a cart-driver, managed to extricate her from her perilous position. Carrying her into a shop, he got her composed and restored so far as to be able to speak. She told him her address, and requested, in the most winning tones, that he would procure a cab to convey her there.

Steuart was all alacrity; this was an adventure quite to his mind, and saying to himself, by Jove she's glorious! went off to bring the desired conveyance. She allowed herself to be lifted into it; and Steuart, greatly to his own ohagrin, but just for the sake of appearances, proposed to ride outside; this, however, she would not hear of; and despite her suffering, which was apparently great, she smiled so charmingly as he took his seat opposite to her, that he

blessed his stars, and felt equal to anything.

On the way she informed him how the accident had taken place. In her brother's absence, she said, she had been spending the evening with a female friend, and being obliged to return home alone, had, in rushing across the street to catch an omnibus, been knocked down and trampled on by the cab-horse. He was all sympathy, and she was all gratitude; and she had such a frank, happy manner of expressing herself, that even the wordy Steuart felt himself small.

When the cab drew up, he declared himself sorry that she should have had to endure so long a ride after being so bruised and shaken—the hypocrite! he wished it had been a mile or two longer with such a fair companion, but he liked to say neat things, and he always said them in a very gentlemanly way. At least so thought Henrietta Quintin, as he supported her into the house, and offered to go for her brother, a physician, or anybody she liked. At her request he brought a doctor, and, considering it would be out of the way for him to stay longer, he, with many bows, and expressions of sorrow, hopes, &c., took his leave.

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On the evening of the next day Steuart Kerr was sitting with his feet on the stove, a cigar in his mouth, and a volume of Shakspeare on his knee, when the door was thrown open, and a long, tall manly figure made its appearance.

You are Mr. Kerr, I suppose? said the stranger. Steuart bowed. Then I am come to thank you for your gallant conduct towards my sister yesterday.

Oh, don't mention it! said Steuart, highly gratified.

We were in distress to know to whom we owed our thanks, till the physician came, said the stranger. He knew you, and, by his directions, I have found you out.

Your sister, I hope, has not sustained any serious injury, said Steuart. I intended to call to-day, to inquire, but I feared I might be intruding.

Intruding! said the other. Not at all, Mr. Kerr. After what you have done for my dear sister, you must allow me to consider you a friend.

Steuart would fain have detained him, to ask more about himself and sister; but the stranger was already on his feet. Very quietly and simply he went about everything. He had done his errand, and he prepared to depart. Very like his sister Steuart Kerr thought him as he stood ready to leave; he had the same bright black eyes, and dark, wavy hair, the same calm, pale complexion. The great difference between them lay in the mouth. Hers was a straight-cut, cold, almost cruel mouth, while his expressed extraordinary quality of soul. Though the best feature in his face, it was hidden under a rough moustache, as the tenderness of his heart was hidden under a rough exterior. Perhaps his nose was less perfect than his sister's faultless Grecian, and his forehead less smooth and fair; but he had that wondrous smile around the mouth which could compensate for a hundred defects.

Steuart did not think all this—he only thought him something like his sister, but not nearly so good-looking.

Good-bye, Mr. Kerr. Be sure you come to see us, he said,—but, I beg your pardon, I believe you do not know our name. Here is my card. My sister and I are from Devonshire; she accompanied me here to have the opportunity of studying music and German under my protection, and, as I may say, at the fountain head; but I hope we shall hear all about each other by and by. In the meantime I must again thank you, and be gone.

Well that is a queer card, said Steuart, meaning the man, not the card, which was a very plain affair, bearing on it the name, Alfred Quintin, Tiverton Hall, Devonshire. I wonder what the lady's name can be! he murmured; something grand and stately no doubt—Augusta, Leonora, Beatrice, these would suit her; and so the young man smoked his cigar and read of Portia, and Juliet, and Queen Katherine, and whichever he read about, he pictured her to himself exactly like Miss Quintin. No matter though Portia had golden hair, she was the dark-eyed Portia to him; and so he dreamed about her, and never thought of little Carrie, for whom he had lately professed such unwavering affection. When her kind letter came that night it came as a jar in a rare piece of music, and was carelessly read and carelessly flung aside. In it she told him nothing of her arduous studies intending to keep the secret as a sweet surprise for him when he should return; but she mentioned that for some time she had been confined to the house with a bad cough, and added that she was fretting over it, and so wished him to write often to cheer her.

Bah! he muttered. I wonder if she thinks a fellow has nothing to do but write long letters to amuse a petted child. Saying which he resumed his reading.

When he went to bed it was but to dream about Portia lying all in a heap

under cab horses, Juliets, poison cups, and doctors, all mixed up together. When he awoke his first thought was, "This is the day I must call upon Miss Quintin; so no wonder that the studies of that morning seemed interminable."

Dressed in his best, and slightly flushed, Steuart Kerr looked very handsome when, that afternoon he stood in the presence of Miss Quintin, and inquired tenderly after her health. She lay upon a couch in a pretty drawing room, in one of the windows of which sat her brother writing. He rose and with a quiet, courteous smile, said, extending his hand, come, I must introduce you formally to my sister; Mr. Kerr, Miss Henrietta Quintin. She could not rise, but as Steuart approached her couch she extended a small white hand, and bade him welcome. He felt very happy she seemed so gracious to him.

My brother, she said, called upon you last night, I understand; but I am sure he did not convey half the thanks I felt were due to you for saving me from a dreadful end.

Oh, my dear young lady, he replied, do not talk in that way about what might have been; all's well that ends well, you know.

I don't know that it is so very well, Mr. Kerr, said the fair invalid, here am I to be confined to the house for ever so long, with no one to speak to but that quiet old thing in the corner there.

Here the quiet old thing interposed in self-defence.

Oh, Henrietta, you naughty girl, did I not promise to read to you my spare time? Did I not promise, even, to make an attempt to overcome my extraordinary diffidence in female society by bringing Miss Fietke, or some of your acquaintance, to keep you company?

Well, Alfred dear, I beg your pardon, she said; but you have not set about doing either yet; and here am I with nothing but a lot of old, dry German lesson-books and the clock to keep me company.

If you will allow me, said Steuart, I will supply you with some books which will help you to pass your time; and he was going to add read to you, but he thought that was rather too bold a leap, and might unsettle him altogether.

Oh, you are too kind, Mr. Kerr; I shall be very, very grateful for them, she said. Which kind of literature do you admire most?

She had asked the question most suited to the taste of Steuart. Unwittingly she had opened a vein, rich in a way, but one we will not follow.

For hours the conversation and quotations went on bravely, never flagging, and at length, when Steuart Kerr proposed to go, Alfred Quintin rose from his writing with some vague impressions about him that for half the night he had been listening to the hum of bees, the wail of the wind, or the roll of the sea. After showing him out, he muttered to himself on his way back to the drawing-room, she has found her match at last; I wonder how long they could talk without stopping? Well, Etta, are you tired? he said kindly, as he entered.

Oh no, Alfred, I could have listened to him for ever, she replied; he has such a voice, and such a wonderful memory!

CHAPTER III.

It was the time when the gowans began to dock the hill-sides, and the young lambs gladden the landscape—the happiest time in all the year, the time when sweet hopes spring up from cankered cares, like young blades from the leafy mould.

In one of the fairest scenes that Scotland can boast, surrounded by every luxury that wealth and indulgence could lavish, even in the glad spring-time when everything seemed reviving, a little form was drooping, and a rose-tinted cheek was growing pure and pale as the lily itself. Carrie was fading away. The bright Caroline, that spoke out with such honest spirit to her coxcomb lover on the wharf at Leith, that went with such heroic determination back to the drudgery of school to fit herself for a man who was in no way worthy of her—the idol of her uncle, the sought after of many suitors, the loved of companions, children, and servants, was spoken of by every one as fated for an early grave.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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