

Poetry.

LEFT ALONE AT EIGHTY.

What did you say, dear? breakfast?
Somehow I've slept too late;
You are very kind, dear Effie;
Go tell them not to wait;
I'll dress as quick as ever I can;
My old hands tremble sore,
And Polly, who used to help, dear heart!
Lies 't' other side o' the door.

Put up the old pipe, deary,
I couldn't smoke to day;
I'm sort o' dazed and frightened,
And don't know what to say;
It's lonesome in the house, here,
And lonesome out o' door;
I never know what lonesome meant
In all my life before.

The bees go humming the whole day long,
And the first June rose has blown,
And I am eighty, dear Lord, to-day—
Too old to be left alone!
O, heart of love! so still and cold!
O, precious lips! so white!
For the first sad hour in sixty years,
You were out of my reach last night.

You've cut the flower? You are very kind.
She rooted it last May;
It was only a slip; I pulled the rose,
And threw the stem away;
But she, sweet thrifty soul, bent down
And planted it where she stood;
"Dear, maybe the flowers are living," she
said,
"Asleep in this bit of wood."

I can't rest, deary—I cannot rest;
Let the old man have his will,
And wander from porch to garden post,
The house is so deathly still;
Wander, and long for the sight of the gate
She has just left ajar for me.
We had got so used to each other, dear—
So used to each other, you see.

Sixty years, and so wise and good,
She made me a better man
From the moment I kissed her fair young
face,
And our lover's life began.
And seven fine boys she has given me,
And out of the seven, not one
But the noblest father in all the land
Would be proud to call his son.

O, well, dear Lord, I'll be patient,
But I feel sore broken up;
At eighty years, it's an awesome thing
To drain such a bitter cup.
I know there's Joseph and John and Hal,
And four good men beside;
But a hundred sons couldn't be to me
Like the woman I made my bride.

My little Polly! so bright and fair!
So winsome and good and sweet!
She had roses twined in her sunny hair,
White shoes on her dainty feet;
And I held her hand—was it yesterday
That we stood up to be wed?
And—no, I remember, I'm eighty to-day,
And my dear wife, Polly, is dead.

Tales and Sketches.

THE WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

"All precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For Love, in sequel, works with Fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth."

Cold and white as the bridal blossoms in
her hair was the youthful cheek, which a glow
of love and pride should have kindled into
color; for Harriet Percy, though about to be-
come the bride of one of the most admired and
distinguished men in the country, was too
well convinced of his indifference towards her,
to anticipate happiness in prospect. She knew
that with him it was a marriage of expediency.
That he was poor—that he required means to
further his ambitious views, and that, though
uniformly kind and respectful in his manner
when they met, he had scarcely bestowed a
thought upon her mind, heart, or person, dur-
ing the three weeks which intervened between
their introduction to each other and this their
bridal morning.

For years before that introduction, even
from childhood, she had worshipped his lofty
genius, and admired, at a distance, his noble
form. He was the idol of her every dream—
her hero—her ideal! His haughty bearing,
his coldly intellectual expression, which would
have repelled a less ardent and romantic heart,
had for her an ineffable charm. And when,
at a party given by a mutual, match-making
friend, during the first season of her entrance
into society, he had been introduced to her,
she was so agitated and confused by her various
emotions, that she could only blush and reply
in monosyllables to his polite attempts at con-
versation.

Poor Harriet was angry and mortified at
herself; and utterly unsuspecting, in her own
guileless truth, of any mercenary motive on
his part, she was not less amazed than delight-
ed when, after two or three interviews of the
same description, he formally proposed to her
father for her hand, and was at once accepted.
Exulting in her conquest, yet awed by his dis-
tant demeanour, she hardly knew at first
whether to be happy or the contrary; but

loving and gentle as she was, there was a
latent spirit of pride and lofty resolution in
her soul, which she had never dreamed of till
it was awakened by her present situation.

With a woman's instinct, she learned to
read his heart. She saw that the demon Am-
bition had obscured, without obliterating, its
nobler and more tender feelings, and she trust-
ed to time and her own truth to conquer the
one and arouse the other.

But in the meantime she would be no pining
victim to neglect. Her sweet lip curled—her
dark eyes flashed—her high spirit revolted at
the thought! She would sooner die than
humble herself in his eyes! She would love
him, it is true, dearly, deeply, devotedly; but
it should be in the silent depths of a soul he
could not fathom. Not till he should own a
love, fervent and devoted as her own, would
she yield to the tenderness he inspired. Not
till then should he be unveiled to him the altar
on which his image dwelt; enshrined like a
deity of old, with the breath of affection for
its incense, ever burning over and around it,
and the fruits and flowers of feeling and of
thought—its sacrifice.

She would wed him, because her fortune
could assist his efforts for the good of his coun-
try and his own distinction. She would have
bestowed that fortune upon him without her
hand, but she knew his pride too well to
dream he would accept it, and her resolution
was taken.

Mr. William Harwood could not, for his
life, have told whether his intended bride had
any claims to beauty or to talent. He saw
that her manners were refined, he knew that
her fortune was immense, and he was satis-
fied. He heeded not—he never dreamed of
the riches of her heart and mind. But while
ambition and selfishness blinded his eyes to
her superiority, it was not so with others. A
dazzling fair complexion, soft, wavy hair, of
the palest brown, hazel eyes, intensely dark,
and fringed with long, thick lashes of the same
hue, a straight Greek nose, a mouth of exqui-
site beauty, in the expression of which sweet-
ness and spirit were charmingly combined, a
light and gracefully moulded form—these were
the least of her attractions. A thousand
numberless graces, a thousand lovely but in-
describable enchantments in manner, look,
and tone, betrayed the soul within; and yet,
with all this, she was so modest, so timid, so
thoroughly feminine and gentle in all her
ways and words, that the world never dream-
ed of calling her a beauty, or of making her a
belle. It was those she loved that she en-
chanted.

CHAPTER II.

She stood like a beautiful statue by his side.
She quelled her tears—she hushed her heart,
and spoke in accents calm and cold as his own
the vows which were to bind them for life
unto each other. She received the congratu-
lations of friends and acquaintances without a
sigh, a blush, a sign of emotion, modestly but
coldly. Even Harwood himself wondered at
her strange self-possession, and while he
wondered rejoiced that she had so little feel-
ing to trouble him with. But when her father
approached to say farewell, and led her to the
carriage, which was to bear her far from home,
her proud resolve gave way! She threw her-
self on his breast, and sobbed passionately
and wildly, like a grieved and frightened
child, till her husband, astonished at such a
display of emotion in one usually so quiet and
subdued, drew her gently away, and seating
himself beside her in her carriage, ordered the
driver to proceed.

Harriet withdrew from his arm, pleaded
fatigue, covered her face with her veil, and,
soon succeeding in conquering every outward
sign of emotion, sat still and silent during the
journey.

It was the evening of this wedding-day. The
bride had retired to dress for dinner, and Har-
wood sat dreaming before the library fire,
when a note was put into his hands by a foot-
man. What was his surprise at the contents!

"You do not love me!—and no pretence of
love which you may adopt, from motives of
duty or compassion, will avail with me. You
had your object in proposing this union—I
had mine in accepting that proposal. Be con-
tent that those objects are gained, and let me
be your wife but in name, I beseech you."

HARRIET HARWOOD.

Harwood started at the paper in astonish-
ment at first; but he had always looked upon
Harriet as a child, and he soon began to con-
sider this as some childish and romantic whim,
which required his indulgence.

Amused, perplexed, and, if the truth must
be told, a little piqued withal, he hastily
wrote on a slip of paper—"Be it so!" and
folding it, laid it on the table by the side of
her plate.

Harriet blushed as she entered, but took
her seat quietly and silently. She glanced
at the paper, and, with a trembling hand,
unfolded it. Her cheek and eye kindled as
she read, and her pretty lip quivered for a
moment. She put the billet by, and proceed-
ed, with calm and graceful self-possession, to
the duties of the table. Mr. Harwood, think-
ing to himself, for the first time, that his wife
was a remarkably pretty woman, dismissed
the subject from his mind, and discussed his
dinner with great gusto, and the political topics
of the day with still greater.

Fair reader! you will say that Mr. Wil-
liam Harwood was a most unfeeling person.
But that was by no means the case. He had
been, from childhood, so devoted to intellec-
tual pursuits, that he had never found time

to think of love. Had his good angel
but whispered to him, at that moment, that
his beautiful *vis-a-vis* loved him as her life,
and that her full heart was waiting and ex-
pecting his love in return, he would have giv-
en it as in honor bound, and have wondered
that he never thought of it before; but the
mischief was, he didn't happen to think any-
thing about it; and I, for one, cannot find it
in my heart to scold him, for if he had thought
I should have had no story to tell.

CHAPTER III.

Sosing Harriet only at meals, and absorbed
in his ambitious schemes, Harwood at last
almost forgot that he had a wife, and the poor
girl strove to content herself in her own silent
and secret worship of her husband—
But love, unloved, is but a wearying task at
best!
Better be lying in the grave, in dreamless,
careless rest!

She mingled sometimes with the gay; but
society had no excitement for a mind like
hers. She could not long enjoy a conversa-
tion in which her heart was not in some way
interested. For, while the poetry of feeling
was her element, Harriet was not an intellec-
tual person—she was more spiritual than in-
tellectual—her heart supplied the place of a
mind.

One evening, at a party, a young English
officer, approaching Harwood, exclaimed, "My
dear sir! do you know, can you tell me the
name of that beautiful creature leaning by the
window? There, that pale, dark-eyed girl in
white! You ought to know, for she has been
looking at you, with her whole soul in the
look, for the last five minutes."

Harwood looked up; he caught the eloquent
gaze of those beautiful eyes; he saw her start,
and instantly avert them, with a sudden blush,
as if detected in a crime, and strange and new
emotions thrilled his heart. The hour had
come. Love, the high-priest, had suddenly
appeared at the altar, and the fire was kindled
at length, never again to be wholly extinguish-
ed. For the first time aroused to a sense of
her singular loveliness, for the first time sus-
pecting her hidden passion for himself, he
colored, smiled, and seemed so confused, that
his friend was turning away in surprise. But
Harwood recovered himself, and taking his
arm, led him forward and introduced him to
his wife.

As we have said before, Harwood was by
no means without a heart; but his giant in-
tellect and his position in life had hitherto
rendered him unconscious of so valuable a
possession. After listening for a few moments
impatiently to Harriet's graceful and naive
conversation with the handsome young officer,
he drew her hand within his arm, and press-
ing it tenderly, whispered, "Let us go home
dear Harriet; I am weary of this scene."

"Dear Harriet!" Was she dreaming! The
words, the tone, look, and warm caress, all
thrilled to her inmost heart. Her eyes filled
with tears, and trembling with the heavenly
ecstasy of the moment, almost fainting, indeed
from excess of emotion, she murmured, "Yes,
let us go at once."

He sprang into the carriage after her, and
drew her to his heart. "Oh, William! do
you—do you love me! Can it indeed be
true?"

"My wife!"

The scene is sacred—let the curtain fall.

CHAPTER IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind,
The magic music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.

At an unusually early hour, the next even-
ing, Harwood returned to his now happy home,
and, hastening up the stairs, paused at the
door of his wife's boudoir, arrested with her
voice within. She was singing, in a low and
touching voice, and with exquisite taste, a
simple song which he had never heard before.
Though naturally very fond of music, it had
happened by some strange chance that he had
not heard Harriet play or sing, indeed, he did
not know that she possessed either accom-
plishment. The words of the song went
straight to his heart, and thus they ran:—
I know it! I felt it!—he loves me at last!
The heart-hidden anguish for ever is past!
Love brightens his dark eye and softens his
tone;
He loves me—he loves me—his soul is mine
own!

Come care and misfortune—the cloud and the
storm—
I've a light in this heart all existence to
warm—
No grief can oppress me, no shadow o'rcast,
In that blessed conviction—he loves me at
last!

Echoing, with his rich, manly voice, the
last five words, Harwood opened the door and
held out his arms, and his happy and beau-
tiful wife flew to his embrace, with a fresh and
artless delight, peculiarly fascinating to the
world-worn man she worshipped.

CHAPTER V.

For three months Harwood was a devoted
lover and husband, and Harriet was happy in
his love; but he could not all at once, and for
ever, forego the glorious dreams of his youth;
and by degrees he returned to his political
duties, and grew gradually stately and cold,
and apparently indifferent as before.

And now Harriet was more wretched than
ever. Now, that she had once experienced
the happiness of being loved, caressed, admir-
ed, she could not endure life unloved by

tenderness and hope. By nature ardent, sus-
ceptible, dependent upon those around her for
happiness, and clinging to all who could offer
her affection, it had been only by a violent
struggle that she had forced herself into a
state of apparent apathy, during the first few
weeks of her marriage; but, once aroused
from it, she had abandoned her whole being
to the enchantment of Love's happy dream,
and henceforward life was lost without it.

Her husband's returning coldness and neglect
had wounded, but not subdued her heart;
and what was the wife to do with all the now
unemployed feelings and fancy awakened in
its depths.

The interesting young officer, before men-
tioned, had fallen in love with Harriet at first
sight, ere he knew she was the bride of his
friend; and, though distinguished in the field
by his bravery and skill, self-conquest was an
art of which he had neither learnt nor dreamt.
Visiting from time to time at the house, he
soon saw her unhappiness, and penetrated its
cause. His sympathy was excited—his visits
grew more frequent—with refined and subtle
tenderness, almost irresistible to a heart like
hers, he entered earnestly into her pursuits—
real with her, walked with her, sang with
her—praised her mind and heart—called her
"the sister of his soul," and so adapted him-
self to her tastes and her affections, that Har-
riet found herself on the verge of a precipice,
ere she was aware she had overstepped the
limits of propriety and discretion. It was a
sort of spiritual magnetism, which she tried
in vain to resist.

Harriet would not have been guilty of actual
crime—she was too proud and too pure for
that; but in a soul so highly toned, so deli-
cately and daintily organised as hers, the
slightest aberration in thought, look, or deed,
from the faith which was due to her husband,
produced a discord, involving the loss of self-
respect, and consequent misery and remorse.

And now Love and Sorrow swept the
strings, and awakened a melody sweet but
plaintive as the sound of an Eolian harp.
They had made her a poet, and she poured
forth, in frequent verse, the various emotions
they aroused.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Harwood had just returned from a long
journey. He had been unsuccessful in two or
three important projects, and, disgusted with
the uncertainty attending his pursuits, he had
suddenly determined to abandon politics al-
together. His heart yearned toward his sweet
wife as it had never yearned before. He had
been away from her so long! He needed her
love now, now needed her soft voice to soothe
and comfort him, and he came prepared, not
only to receive, but to give consolation. He
entered her boudoir softly, intending to sur-
prise her. She was reclining on the sofa asleep
—pale and sad, with tears still lingering on
her lashes, and her fair hair streaming from
her childish brow—her lips half parted, and
singing as she slept, she looked so enchantingly
lovely, that he sprang forward to awaken her
with a kiss, when a paper, lying loosely
in her hand, arrested her attention. He drew
it softly from her. It was addressed—"To
My husband," and thinking himself thus justi-
fied in reading it, he did so, with what emo-
tions may be better imagined than told. It
was as follows:—

Oh! hasten to my side, I pray!
I dare not be alone!
The smile that tempts, when thou'rt away,
Is fonder than thine own.

The voice that oftenest charms my ear,
Hath such beguiling tone,
'Twill steal my very soul, I fear,
Ah! leave me not alone!

It speaks in accents low and deep,
It murmurs praise too dear;
It makes me passionately weep,
Then gently soothes my fear.

It calls me sweet, endearing names,
With Love's own childlike art;
My tears, my doubts, it softly blames—
'Tis music to my heart!

And dark, deep, eloquent, soul-filled eyes
Speak tenderly to mine;
Beneath that gaze what feelings rise!
It is more kind than thine!

A hand, even pride can scarce repel,
Too fondly seeks mine own,
It is not safe!—it is not well!
Ah! leave me not alone!

I try to calm, in cold repose,
Beneath his earnest eye,
The heart that thrills, the cheek that glows—
Alas! in vain I try!

Oh! trust me not—a woman frail—
To brave the snares of life!
Lest lonely, sad, unloved, I fail,
And shame the name of wife!

Come back! though cold and harsh to me,
There's honor by thy side!
Better unblest, yet safe, to be,
Than lost to truth, to pride!

Alas! my peril hourly grows,
In every thought and dream;
Not—not to thee my spirit goes,
But still—yes! still to him!

Return with those cold eyes to me,
And chill my soul once more,
Back to the loveless apathy,
It learned so well before!

Jealousy, anger, pity, remorse, and love
were at war in the breast of Harwood; but,
with a moment's reflection through the past,
upon his own conduct, the three latter con-
quered, and, kneeling by her side, he pressed
his lips upon her brow. She murmured softly
in her sleep, "Dear, darling husband! do you

love me?" and the color trembled in her
cheek like the rosy light of morning on the
snow.

Harwood pressed her, passionately to his
heart, and she awoke terrified, ashamed, peni-
tent, yet happy at length beyond expression,
for she forgave and was forgiven. She had
overrated, in her sensitive conscientiousness,
the extent of her error. Her fancy, her mind,
rather than her affections, had been beguiled.
Harwood felt at once that the dewy bloom of
purity had not been brushed from the heart of
his fragile flower, by the daring wing of the
insect that had sought it, and henceforth it
was cherished in its proper home—his own
noble and faithful breast!

TRIED AND TRUE.

It was the Carnival season in Paris; and
Colonel Eugene Merville, an attaché of the
great Napoleon's staff, who had won his way
to distinction with his own sabre, found him-
self at the masked ball in the French opera
house. Better adapted in his tastes to the
field than to the boudoir he flirts but little
with the gay figures that covers the floor and
joins but seldom in the waltz. But at last,
while standing thoughtfully and regarding the
assembled throng with a vacant eye, his at-
tention was suddenly aroused by the appear-
ance of a person in a white satin domino, the
universal elegance of whose figure, manner,
and bearing convinced him that her face and
mind must be equal to her person in grace and
loveliness. Though in so mixed an assembly,
still there was a dignity and reserve in the
manner of the white domino that rather re-
pelled the idea of a familiar address, and it
was some time before the young soldier found
courage to speak to her.

"Ah lady! pray raise that mask, and re-
veal to me the charms of feature that must
accompany so sweet a voice and so graceful a
form as you possess?"

"You would perhaps be disappointed."

"No, I am sure I would not."

"Are you so very confident?"

"Yes. I feel that you are beautiful—it
cannot be otherwise."

"Don't be too sure of that. Have you
never heard of the Irish poet Moore's story of
the veiled prophet of Khorassan—how, when
he disclosed his countenance, his hideous
aspect killed his beloved one. How do you
know I shall not turn out a veiled prophet of
Khorassan?"

"Ah lady, your every word convinces me
to the contrary," replied the enraptured sol-
dier, whose heart had begun to feel as it had
never felt before; he was in love.

She eluded his efforts at discovery; but
permits him to hand her to her carriage,
which drives off in the darkness, and though
he throws himself upon his fleetest horse, he
was unable to overtake her.

The young French colonel became moody;
he has lost his heart, and knows not what to
do. He wanders hither and thither, shuns
his former places of amusement, avoids his
military companions and in short, feels as
miserable as a lover can well be thus disap-
pointed. One night, just after he had left his
hotel on foot, a figure muffled to the very ears
stopped him.

"Well, Monsieur, what would you with
me?" asked the soldier.

"You would know the name of the white
domino?" was the reply.

"I would indeed. How can it be done?"
replied the officer hastily.

"Follow me."

"Very well."

"Step into this vehicle."

"I am at your command."

Away rattled the youthful soldier and his
strange companion. "This may be a trick,"
reasoned Eugene, "but I have no fear of per-
sonal violence. I am armed with this trusty
sabre, and can take care of myself. But there
was no cause for fear since he soon found the
vehicle stop; and he was led blindfolded into
the house. When the bandage was removed
from his eyes, he found himself in a richly
furnished boudoir, and before him stood the
white domino, just as he had met her at the
masked ball. To fall upon his knees and tell
her how much he thought of her since their
separation was as natural as to breathe, and
he did so gallantly and sincerely.

"Shall I believe all you say?"

"Lady, let me prove it by any test you may
put upon me."

"Know, then, that the feelings you avow
are mutual. Nay, unloose your arm from my
waist. I have some more to say."

"Talk on forever, lady! Your voice is
music to my heart and ears."

"Would you marry me knowing no more of
me than you do now?"

"Yes, if you would go to the very altar
masked."

"Then I will test you."

"How?"

"For one year be faithful to the love
you have professed, and I will be yours
—as truly as heaven shall spare my life."

"Oh, cruel suspense!"

"You demur?"

"Nay, lady, I shall fulfil your injunctions
as I promised."

"If, at the expiration of a year, you do not
hear from me, then the contract shall be
null and void. Take this half ring, and when
I supply the broken portion I will be
yours."

He kissed the little emblem, swore again and