

POETRY.

LITTLE THINGS.

A good-by kiss is a little thing,
With your hand on the door to go,
But it takes the venom out of the sting
Of a thoughtless word or a cruel thing
That you made an hour ago.

SELECT STORY.

AN UNBROKEN PROMISE.

A CASTAWAY.

PART I.

CHAPTER V.

"No thanks at all, my dear," said the old lady, "it was your own talent and niceness that drew the money, and all I had to do was to collect it, and make it up for you. Now, if you don't want to sleep any more, I will make you a nice cup of tea, and bring it up to you before you dress."

"So soon as she was left alone, Madge took up the letter and read it again. "What can it mean?" she said to herself. "Philip knows I would send him the money at once and safely. I have done so before; it cannot be for that, then, that he is coming! There must be something important that brings him here so soon again! It's over fatigue, I suppose, but I feel horribly low and down this morning, and as if something evil were going to happen."

"All day long the same worried beet her. What could it be? And the apparent importance of it grew as she thought it over. One thing was certain, she must meet him that night. There would be a difficulty, but that must be overcome. Gerald Hardinge would want to see her of course. Now and then, once a week, perhaps, he went in the habit of coming in when he had seen her home from the theatre, and partaking of their frugal supper with her sister and herself, a small but pleasant meal, to which, on such occasions, he always insisted on contributing."

"He would want to come that night, doubtless. There were numerous incidents of the benefit to be talked over; she had scarcely seen him since, and he would doubtless propose himself as a visitor that night. It could not be. She must go to meet Philip; that was imperative; she could devote some story, that would satisfy Gerald, and in order to do that, Rose must be taken into her confidence. The last necessity was very unpleasant to Madge Pierpoint. In the course of her career, straight as she endeavored to keep it, she had to undergo various little shiftings and privations, to pass through various phases of life, not necessarily base or ignoble in themselves, but repugnant to her connections and surroundings. But all these were with scrupulous care hidden from the knowledge of her younger sister. Madge Pierpoint was not unacquainted with the mysteries of the pawnbroker's shop; she had had experience of the hard bargains driven by the tallyman for clothes which were absolutely necessary to her in her profession, and of the extortion of the unscrupulous—frequently some other member of the company—for salary lent her in advance."

"But Rose knew nothing of all these things. She was but a child, Madge said, and it was desirable to provide poor Rose's gowns out of her income," said the Major; "however, of course she can't be allowed to disgrace the family. Let me see," he added, taking the packet from his pocket. "What did you say the figure was?" "Forty-eight pounds," said Madge. "Forty-eight. Five, ten, fifteen, ah, very neatly made up, forty-five in notes and three in gold. Well, Madge, I will see if I can spare you the three pounds, though I must confess that just now it is duced inconvenient."

"Madge took the three sovereigns without a word. The devils of passion and wounded pride were struggling within her, and she dare not trust herself to open her lips. "And by the way," continued Philip Vane, "it was upon the very subject of money that I have come down to talk to you. You know all this applause and all these compliments from old Potbois, or whatever his name is, are very well in their way, but there is nothing substantial about them. The only way to appreciate a thing is by its money value, and the salary you are earning just now is an uncommonly small one."

Gerald arrives, you must tell her the same story; if she comes after him, you will tell her that I have gone to Mrs. Potbois's, who wanted especially to see me, and that I shall not be late."

"But, Madge, won't it— "Do as I tell you, Rose, and don't ask any questions! Depend upon it that I am going to do it both for your interest and mine."

"And Rose, who took a very different view of the affair when she found that Gerald Hardinge was not mixed up with her sister's proceedings, promised compliance and said no more. It was dull work that night at the theatre; Romeo and Juliet was played again, "in consequence of its enormous attraction," but no one who had been present on the previous night would have recognized the performance. Reaction was evident everywhere, even down to the two "supers," and Mrs. Gonnop, who played the nurse. The house was not one-third full, and those persons who were present seemed bored and dissatisfied. The curtain was no sooner down that Madge Pierpoint ran to her dressing room, threw a large cloak over her stage dress, dashed some water over her face, twisted up her hair, put on her bonnet, and sallied forth. She saw nothing of either Miss Cave or Gerald Hardinge, but turned rapidly into the street, and along the road up which we have before tracked her footsteps."

"A very different night from that on which she last went this expedition. Now all was bright and clear, and the moon riding high in the clear sky, and every object in the landscape standing out square and closely defined against her light. This time Madge was not the first to arrive. As she turned into the lane, a figure arose from the bank, against which it had been lying, and advanced to meet her. It was her husband. "You're late," was his genial greeting. "I came away as soon as I could," she replied; "didn't even stop to change my dress—look here." And she opened her cloak, showing Juliet's white robe underneath. "By Jove," he said, glancing at her, "here's a purty sight! What is it, a Druidical priestess or the Virgin of the sun?"

"She flushed angrily for a moment, but recovered herself directly, then said with a short laugh, "You would rather it were Largo's doublet, I suppose, and that I could not merely give you his counsel, 'put money in the purse' but act upon the advice. However, I can do that as it happens without the doublet. This is for you," and she placed a small packet in his hand. "What is this?" he exclaimed, as he took it. "Oh, yes, the benefit. I forgot all about it! How much is there here?" "Forty-eight pounds, Philip," she cried, laying her hand upon his shoulder, and looking up into his face. "Isn't it good?" "Might have been worse," he said, quietly slipping the money into his pocket. "Well, and how did it go off, and all that sort of thing?" "I scarcely know what you mean by all that sort of thing," said Madge; "the house was very full, as you know by the contents of your waist-coat pocket."

"Yes, but you? Did you tip 'em the wind in grand style? Did you let 'em have it from the shoulder?" "There, don't be cross, Madge," said Philip Vane, putting his arm around her; "I know I am always talking slang, but that's the fault of the people I live with; I've no doubt you acted splendidly and got plenty of applause."

"Old Mr. Potbois wrote me a note this morning, declaring he had never seen you since you played, and he recollects Miss O'Neill." "Dear old Potbois," said Philip Vane. "What will he take to drink? Seriously though, I am delighted to hear it. Well, and what have you got to say to me?" "I thought it was to say something to me that you came down here," said Madge; "for my part I have not got much to say. Oh yes, Philip, one thing I want you to do, if you can, to spare me a little of that money."

"Oh," said Madge, "a little of that money, eh?" "Yes, a little will do, Philip; there are two or three things that I absolutely must have in my theatrical wardrobe, and poor Rose has scarcely a gown to her back."

"It seems to me a devilish hard thing that you should have to provide poor Rose's gowns out of her income," said the Major; "however, of course she can't be allowed to disgrace the family. Let me see," he added, taking the packet from his pocket. "What did you say the figure was?" "Forty-eight pounds," said Madge. "Forty-eight. Five, ten, fifteen, ah, very neatly made up, forty-five in notes and three in gold. Well, Madge, I will see if I can spare you the three pounds, though I must confess that just now it is duced inconvenient."

"Oh, damn it," cried Major Vane, "must she go, too?"

"She must, of course. How could I leave her, with whom could I leave her? Of course she must go!" "Well," said Major Vane, after a moment's reflection, "I daresay that could be managed." Wuff will make her play pages' parts, or turn her into something useful, he thought to himself.

"Three years," said Madge, reflectively, "is a long time to be away. Do you think you could manage to live without seeing London and London acquaintances and London ways for three years, Philip?" "No," said that gentleman, candidly. "I am certain I could not."

"But you will have to, if we accept this offer," said Madge. "Eh?" cried Major Vane, in a loud and startled tone; "you don't imagine that I am going away to play a leading lady, do you?" "Do you mean to say that you are not going, Philip?" "I have not the remotest intention of doing anything of the sort; my business engagements here, my good girl, would prevent me."

"Oh," said Madge, quietly, "your proposition, then, relates to me alone?" "Exactly!" "You don't expect me to give you an answer here, and at once, I suppose?" "Well, I did, as I rather want to get back to London."

"It is impossible! It is a matter which will take serious reflection. If you are so pressed, you had better go; I will write to you my decision."

"No," said Philip, promptly, "that won't do; you must make up your mind, please, within the next twelve hours," looking at his watch. "It is now eleven o'clock; at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, I will be here again, and you will be good enough to meet me. Consider it thoroughly, and don't act upon impulse; your reply may have a greater influence on your future than you are at present aware of. Now, good-night."

He did not offer to embrace her; he did not even approach her, but kissed the tips of his fingers airily, and walked off. Madge, standing speechless at the same position, heard the rumbling of the departing wheels of the cab which, as before, he had left at the bottom of the lane; then, with sad face and rebellious heart, she walked the best of her way towards what she called her home.

"What is this?" he exclaimed, as he took it. "Oh, yes, the benefit. I forgot all about it! How much is there here?" "Forty-eight pounds, Philip," she cried, laying her hand upon his shoulder, and looking up into his face. "Isn't it good?" "Might have been worse," he said, quietly slipping the money into his pocket. "Well, and how did it go off, and all that sort of thing?" "I scarcely know what you mean by all that sort of thing," said Madge; "the house was very full, as you know by the contents of your waist-coat pocket."

THE CURSE OF SCOTLAND.

Among the reasons why the nine of diamonds has been called the curse of Scotland, I think that the following has not been given: "Diamonds, nine of, called the curse of Scotland, from a Scotch member of parliament, part of whose family arms is the nine of diamonds voting for the introduction of the malt tax into Scotland."

Chronology; or, the Historian's Companion, fourth edition, by Thos. Tegg, London, 1826, p. 308. (Addenda.) Could the arms of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield, member of Glasgow, contain the nine lozenges? His house was destroyed by a mob in 1727, because he was suspected of having given the government information on the haunts and statistics of Scotland necessary for the preparation of the malt tax, as well as having exposed a system of evading duties in the Scotch tobacco trade—History of Scotland, by J. Hill Burton. In the index to the history, Campbell of Shawfield's christian name is given as David.

There is a George Campbell mentioned as having caused the nine of diamonds to be called the curse of Scotland, because he stole nine diamonds out of the royal crown in the reign of Mary Stuart, in consequence of which all Scotland was taxed.—Notes and Queries. There is a George Campbell mentioned as having caused the nine of diamonds to be called the curse of Scotland, because he stole nine diamonds out of the royal crown in the reign of Mary Stuart, in consequence of which all Scotland was taxed.—Notes and Queries.

It will be news to many readers that the chaff-dish can be used for candy-making and a very neat idea it is. Those chaffing dishes that have a hot water pan beneath the cooking pan—the most of the silver ones are—are best, as then there is no more chance of burning sugar than in any other double boiler. Not only candy, but rich desserts can be tossed off quickly. Here is for a compote of bananas; peel and slice six bananas, a little underripe is best—add one inch stick of cinnamon, the half of a tiny grated lemon rind, one cup of sifted sugar and nearly half a pint of hot water. Boil the flavoring in the water and sugar for ten minutes until it looks syrupy; boil without stirring. Put in the bits of bananas and simmer—when the fruit begins to clear add the juice of half the lemon, and serve with whipped cream and sponge cake.

It is impossible! It is a matter which will take serious reflection. If you are so pressed, you had better go; I will write to you my decision. "No," said Philip, promptly, "that won't do; you must make up your mind, please, within the next twelve hours," looking at his watch. "It is now eleven o'clock; at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, I will be here again, and you will be good enough to meet me. Consider it thoroughly, and don't act upon impulse; your reply may have a greater influence on your future than you are at present aware of. Now, good-night."

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