

Answer it he could, to his sorrow, and he strode on.

Frank met him and exclaimed laughingly, "Well, Gerald, your mad half-hour has certainly come now. Poor boy, I didn't think love was such a serious complaint."

Then first he noticed his brother's altered manner, and a fear of some coming evil, he knew not what, came over him.

Gerald went straight down the path to where the horse stood; and Frank, suddenly withdrawing his hands from their accustomed place, his pockets went after him. The fear had taken shape at last.

"Gerald!" he cried, "what is it? Where are you going? Tell me, what is the matter?"

An angry answer rose to Gerald's lips, but he gulped it down, and with an effort forced himself to answer quietly, if coldly.

"Frank Edwards—did I call you 'brother,' I should give you a sacred name of love, and that you have disgraced—you ask me where I am going; I answer, away from here—where, I do not know, I do not care. Why? Because I did not know that, when I believed I had found happiness here, I was standing in the way of yours. I am awakened now; and though you break my peace, I am glad that you, at least, gain your own. I go because the promise of my boyhood is in my mind now. I keep that promise; I yield to you; I leave this place for ever. Be happy in your new love, but not in my sight. I say good-bye for the sake of auld lang syne!"

He spoke quietly, but he spoke quickly; and before Frank had recovered from his surprise sufficient to reply, Gerald was on his horse. As he took the reins, Frank started forward to seize the horse's head, but Gerald drew his whip across the animal's back; it bounded forward, and Frank's cry, "Gerald, come back!" went after him upon the breeze. He was gone.

These are the memories of the past that come over him now in his solitude and weariness of spirit, the memories of his English Christmas time, which was a Christmas indeed. The face of the fair being he has loved, whom he still loves he feels, with all the strength of his soul, seems to look upon him from every bush that grows about his hut. Her voice seems to call to him and cry, "Forgive!" Home and friends seem to pass before him and say, "Come back!" and Christmas is no Christmas to him there.

In the bitterness of his thoughts he cries aloud, "I have lost her, England, home, friends, brother! No, not him; unworthy thought—still more unworthy name!"

His words come back to him in the dreadful stillness of that place, and seem like voices mocking his great misery. He cries aloud in his sorrow and flings himself upon his couch of skins. There he fights his battle alone, there the happiness of the past comes dancing before his eyes. Sleeping or waking, his fight goes on. Forget he never can, but he must forgive his brother—and her.

In England again, when the autumn is drawing to a close, and dead leaves falling tell the fading year.

Into a cosy sitting room of Rutland Hall the rays of the October sun are falling redly bright. They rest unshadowed upon the form of a fair young girl half lying, half sitting upon a couch near the deep embrasured window, through which she gazes upon the brightness before her. Her face, so sad, so thin and white, is very painful to see, and the great sad eyes, unnaturally brilliant, tell too plainly a painful tale. The thin white hands move nervously, and as if seeking some object which they never reach, as if holding out a welcome to one who does not come.

Ida Rutland, for it is she, is changed indeed. We saw her last that day of broken hopes, of peace destroyed, of forsown faith, and broken plighted troth. On the terrible night when the news of his desertion had come to her, her life had died. Proud for self, she had gone about hiding the wound open in her heart; but she had pined then, as she is pining now. She had resisted long, but had to yield at last to the fever which was burning up her young life. What had she to live for? she asked herself. Nothing. But kind friends who penetrated her secret grief preached the proverb, "While there's life there's hope," and told her he would come back. No, she said; there was no hope. He believed her guilty, and for her the lamp of love was out.

And there she sits now, in the fading red sunlight, the glare subdued by the closing year; and looks out upon the still green life of earth, upon the fresh green lawn before the window; and watches the dead leaves falling. Yet who shall say what she sees? All that passes before her eyes may be as nothing to her. Nor is it.

Thoughts, heart, and mind are far away, and the bright death-telling eyes are fixed on vacancy.

Beside the couch stands a small table, and upon it are two articles. One a picture drawn in water colors, the other a handkerchief, white and torn at one corner. Sometimes these two objects seem to bear a great interest to the fair fragile girl, and she will turn her head from the window and seem to gaze at them. She moves her hand towards the handkerchief and passes her hand over it, as though it were something with life, and with a nature to be caressed. She does it dreamily, unconsciously, and touches it always at the same ragged edge.

What is the story of that rent? Is it that she feels how frail and slender are the threads which hold its parts together? Does she find there

an analogy to her own life, now, like those threads rudely torn?

And the picture? Does that bear a history, that it is always before her? Like the handkerchief, it is her constant companion. But she never looks upon it. It is there, and she will not have it moved, but its face is covered. It lies within her reach, yet she never touches it. What is the secret there?

Only one thing now serves to rouse the unhappy Ida from the dreamy languor into which she has fallen, and in which her life is passing quietly away. The sight of her father will call up a smile to her face, but it is faint and quickly gone.

And the squire? The once jolly hale squire, how is he? Changed, sadly changed. No more is he seen making his way across the fields to the poor laborer's cottage home, to cheer or help the sick man. Even the smile with which he seeks to greet his daughter comes forced and painfully. The great blow has reached him through her, and as day by day he sees her pine before him, and fade, and droop, a curse rises to his lips, good old man at heart though he is, against the man who has destroyed the life of the one being he had left to love, and to love him. Once only had that name been mentioned between them, and then she kissed him to stifle the harsh words which rose upon his tongue, and stopped them with the mild entreaty,

"No; I love him still."

Now, from the further end of the room, he comes towards her. She does not hear him, and she does not look up. In the shadows of the room she sees a vision of the man she loves. Her hand goes out with the same nervous movement as if to welcome him, but meets only the handkerchief; and, as before, her fingers trace their way along it to its ragged edge. And now her face is turned from the window and follows the movements of her hand. Now for the first time throughout the day the vacant eyes seem to brighten, the dreamy look passes off, and she sees the object she is touching. She grasps it quickly, as if with some sudden feeling; then drops it, as if the memory of that feeling pained her. Its fall to the ground releasing with a flutter the ragged parts, and the pieces lie before her, parted and alone.

"Like my love," she murmurs; "like my love."

"No, my darling, not like me; and am I not your love?"

She looks up and sees her father, who, bending over her, kisses her very gently and very, very lingeringly. Then he seats himself beside her, and asks again,

"Am I not your love, Ida?"

"Yes, now," she answers faintly.

But she turns away her head, and once more that handkerchief, with the ragged pieces, lying parted on the floor, meets her eye; and when she turns to her father again, a tear, hot and glistening, falls upon his hand, and tells another tale.

They had come at last—the tears, which had so long refused to relieve her, flow now, and, held in her father's arms, she weeps from her weary broken heart.

The birds chirped their evensong upon the window-ledge before her; the dead leaves still fell; the sun ran its course and sank to rest in the quiet western heaven. And so the day slowly died, and with it the pure bright life died too.

On a bright day in May,—May again, when Nature seemed bursting in her fulness, and the land looked very beautiful; when strong men were playing, in the great heat of the day, the wonderfully heating game of cricket, as if, notwithstanding the almost meridian sun, the blood was cold in their veins; while they raced in mid chase after a ball sent hither and thither across a six-acre field; while some made frantic efforts to knock down two little bits of stick ground across three other sticks planted in the ground, and others exerted themselves as frantically to avoid such a consummation; while one and all panted and puffed, howled and batted, in the exuberance of that strength known only to youth,—a train started on its long journey across country to the old country town of a midland shire, bearing to his home a man "come back to die."

Come back to die? He, with his tall form, broad chest, and bronzed face? He, with the years still young upon his head? Yet Nature, which, disown her as we may for years, at last compels us to yield to her demands—Nature had cried out "Home!" and he had yielded. Better to die there than with strangers, unknown, perhaps unburied.

And yet, when spring has clothed the land again in all her newest beauty, it scarcely seems the time to die. It breathes of health and strength to be renewed to the sinking body, brightness and happiness to the youthful pleasure-seekers, peace and great gladness to the restless troubled spirit; to all, the sweetness of life, making it so hard to leave. Yet I would rather die in the spring-time, and draw my last breath of pure untainted air, to lie at last beneath some young fresh-budding tree, than leave the earth in her term of darkness and chilly wintering.

Some such feeling must have been felt by the king, stern ruler though he had been, who could not die within palace-walls or in cloistered abbey, whose soul demanded that his eyes should look upon Nature in her beauty, for it could not "out of door or window."

When, towards the closing of that May-day, the train reached its journey's end, Gerald Ed-

wards, for it was he, looked once more upon well-remembered scenes. As a chaise bore him from the station, and he turned his face towards the village home he had left in such great bitterness of heart, who shall say what feelings, what emotions, passed through his breast? Was the old anger dead? Was the hope of life quite gone?

A common man, in the rough cord suit of a railway porter, who, in sympathy for the weakness of the traveller, had helped him into the chaise, and settled the rug about his legs, and who, for his attention, had received an unexpectedly handsome fee, wished him a hearty "good-night, and thank'ee kindly, sur."

It woke the traveller from his strange half-absent feeling, and he responded involuntarily and almost as heartily as the man's "good-night." The contrast between the two men was so strange. One face broad, coarse, and red with exertion, the other sad and thin from quiet consuming illness. The one with a frank good-humored smile, the other with a look of sorrow and the lines of pain. It was a great contrast, but each was real, true, and faithful. If "poor and content is rich," then that common man in the railway livery was rich indeed.

The chaise rattled on through the deepening gray of evening, and the traveller passed through old and well-remembered spots towards his home. Memory was hard at work, and his thoughts were busy and confused. Did recollections of old and happy days come crowding in upon him like "troops of friends" to welcome his return?

Welcome? From whom? From—not—from her—she was dead, he knew—but from his brother.

As he neared the village of his home he asked himself, in doubt and irresolution, why had he returned? And he answered himself, that time had thrown a doubt upon words which, when he had heard them uttered, seemed to bear but one meaning. Now he had asked himself if he had not with jealous soul hastily placed upon them a construction they were not meant to bear. Was his the error? Better far to solve the question—to forgive, and, if need be, to be forgiven.

So he had returned to see the old place, to hear once more the voices that had laughed with him in childhood, and dying, to lie near her who even yet, he found, filled the one place in his thoughts and in his heart, and the tress of whose bright golden hair lay upon his breast still beating for love of her.

And now, when the chaise has reached his village home, he fears the coming meeting at the farm, and dares not think it may be happy there. He leaves the chaise at the corner of a lane that leads away up to the quiet old village church, and bids the driver go slowly on. Forgetting for the moment where it would lead him—only wishing for the respite of a few minutes and the quiet of the evening—he walks on until he stands under the grand old trees by the dear old church, and finds around him white tombstones, heading quiet graves dotting the green churchyard. Beneath him lies the village, and he can mark every turn of the white roadway, tracing it along nearly to the farm. That, too, he could see, he thinks, if he crossed to the other corner of the churchyard. Would it have its old red glow of firelight in the kitchen, blazing through the windows winter or summer?

Acting on the impulse of his thoughts he crosses the churchyard towards the other side, trembling, not from the ghostly dimness of the place, but from very eagerness. He was weak, he knew, and the excitement he thought would pass off. But before he could reach the point he had proposed to himself, before he could view the farm, the home to which he was returning now, he stopped as though struck.

There, there before him stood the box-like stone which marked the entrance to the Rutland vault. It came upon him so suddenly, and yet he knew it so well, but had not thought, that he staggered as though he had received a heavy blow. The memory and the presence of the dead came before him then, and he stood spell-bound, transfixed by the terrible charm of death's monument.

The trees waved in light leafy canopy over the sacred place, and all around the light and quiet air seemed to be. To him it seemed that the statue-angels guarding the corners of the vault were indeed angels, and shed around that grave—her grave, he thought—their holy light. Only when the leaves rustled at last the spell upon him seemed loosened, and then he staggered forward.

"Ida, Ida!" he cried aloud, "why did I ever leave you?"

"Gerald, Gerald!" whose fault was that?" a voice said close to him.

Raising his head, separated only from him by the stone, he saw his brother.

And so they met. There was no anger, only anguish, in Gerald's mind.

"Take me away, Frank," he said. "This is too much for me now. I have come back to die."

"No, not to die, Gerald. You will be better soon, and she—"

"Hush, hush, for pity's sake! Take me away from here. Take me home—your home, if you will," Gerald said.

"My home! Both our homes—the old home, Gerald."

"Hark!" said Gerald, as they turned to the gate. "Hark!"

Below them the sound of voices, coming up the village street, came borne upon the air—voices of strong hearty men, happy light-hearted men. And the chorus, nearer and nearer as they came

below them, rang out upon the evening air, surged up to the two men, so painfully parted, so strangely united again, and sent a thrill to the hearts of each: "Auld Lang Syne!"

Frank felt that the words forged stronger the link in the chain of reunion. Gerald felt that it recalled his last words to his brother at their parting.

"For Auld Lang Syne!" Again the chorus came up upon the air, and Gerald reached out his hand and cried,

"Frank, Frank, forgive me!"

Frank led him away down a quieter way than that of the village road, and on towards the old home; but before they reached it the tale of wrong was told, and Gerald sought no explanation.

Frank heard him out with wonder, scarcely knowing how to deceive his brother, and fearing by a sudden shock to add to the chances of his illness. He led him on, not speaking much, but trying gradually and gently to bring before him the events of the past twelvemonths, and Gerald walked on quietly, unconsciously, until he found himself standing almost at the entrance of Rutland Hall.

He started then; for there, upon the low balcony which ran in front of the house, he saw, outlined by the soft light from within the room, a fair form he had known too well. Was it real, or only a dream? Was it life, or a spirit of the past?

It moved—the form upon the balcony stretched forth a hand to welcome him—it lived.

But two words passed between them:

"Ida!"

"Gerald!"

And hers came with a gasp, for the next moment he held her in his arms.

Perhaps it is as well here to follow the custom in such cases, and apologize for not being able to give the conversation which followed—if conversation the disjointed utterances could be called. Suffice it that to neither was the sudden surprise fatal.

We all know who has said that there is nothing new under the sun; and taking it as truth, what is the good of repeating stale things? If not true, wait, reader, till the time comes, if it has not come to you already, when the deepest, truest, holiest emotion of life glows in your heart. At such times then there is something "new" for "poor humanity" under the sun; and I would not for the world anticipate it for you.

"I thought you were dead," said Gerald at length, when, having taken her into the room, they were seated together.

"Dead?" she repeated. "No, papa—"

He did not let her finish; but she gave him to understand that his was only a dream in that Australian cabin, and she blessed the dream which had sent him back to her, to forgive him and once more to call him hers.

It was only after some hours had elapsed that Frank—discreet man—reappeared. He came then, and to the two listeners told the tale of the error. Ida too produced a picture, and a handkerchief marked with blood and torn at one corner.

The handkerchief Gerald recognized as one that she had bound round his head that evening he had rescued her father and injured himself.

The picture was of a man rescuing another from a mill-stream. In it Gerald recognized two portraits, and he pressed the original of one to his heart.

To secure that picture, having taken Frank into her confidence, Ida had perilled her life's happiness, though unknowingly. To that the conversation on the river had reference. If, upon the reader's mind, there appears little ground for jealousy in the words spoken, let him remember this: In man's quick nature the greater impulse is honor. Gerald's was a mind nobly endowed, his nature strong, and he offered, as a sacrifice upon the altar of his brotherly love, the highest affections of his soul.

The explanation bore to each a lesson in love, in courage, and in life; and though seas were set betwixt them, their hearts were not divided, but owned "Love's Loyalty."

## HUMOROUS.

THE best reason yet advanced for having Monday washing day, the next day after Sunday, is because cleanliness is next to godliness.

IN Russia, "Hello" is rendered "Tzikan-sikranjanzki," hence the telephone can never be introduced into that country.

A CARELESS boy swallowed a revolver cartridge the other day, and his mother doesn't dare to "wallop" him for fear he'll go off.

LADIES are like watches—pretty enough to look at; sweet faces and delicate hands, but somewhat difficult to "regulate" after they are set a-going.

BEWARE!—He who courts and goes away may live to court another day, but he who weds and courts girls still, may get in court against his will.

"THERE!" triumphantly exclaimed a Dead-wood editor, as a bullet came through the window and shattered the inkstand, "I knew that new 'personal' column would be a success."

A MAN named Dunlop requested Theodore Hook to make a punning allusion to his name. "Well, just lop off the last syllable," responded the wit; "and it's Dun."

WHEN a man kums to me for advice, I find out the kind of advice he wants, and I give it to him; this satisfies him that he and I are two as smart men as there is living.—Josh Billings.

The boy stood near the mule's hind legs, With utmost confidence— Although no more he'll look so sweet, He'll have a deal more sense.