

*The Album  
of  
Autographs*

passed over quickly, because we knew that most of our visitors were not greatly interested in them. And, anyway, we were eager to have the visitors read from another album, the album of autographs, which always reposed on the whatnot in the corner, over a tidy crocheted of Berlin wool.

The autograph album, in its heyday, became with us almost a malady. Everybody had one, and everybody was composing something suitable, even if, perhaps, not original. It was much too cold and formal to write merely one's name, and therefore it became the ambition of the upcoming generation to think out something that would be arresting, appropriate and to one's credit. And consequently it was with obvious impatience that we waited until the visitor had seen all the photographs of father's folks and mother's folks, had heard about uncle Harry and grandfather and grandmother on father's side, and had seen the nameplates hanging on the wall. We always stood right at mother's elbow with the autograph album ready in our hands and a bottle of frostproof ink, with pen, on the centre table. Then when at length the moment did arrive, when the first album was closed and fastened with the clasp that shone like gold, we pressed forward with the most important item in the entertainment, and asked with, I fear, some timidity whether the visitor would deign to write in our album.

It was, quite properly, the duty as well as the privilege of the visitor, before writing, to read what already had been written. And he would read on the first page this fervent tribute:

Ah, all who know our glorious Kate  
Admire her form so full and straight.  
Tender her glance; from her sweet lip  
Enamoured bees might honey sip!

This reveals not only ability to rhyme, but also admiration and an appreciation of what such beauty might bestow.

Then follows something in the form almost of a prayer; at least it was written by a more pious hand:

Smooth be life's pathway before thee,  
And bright with the sunshine of love,  
May garlands of flowers enwreath thee  
Till angels shall crown thee above.

As "Above" meant, we must suppose, Heaven, it plays an important part in the wishes and sentiments recorded in the album. For the visitor would proceed to read:

As our friendship has budded on earth,  
So may it blossom in Heaven.

*Hopes of  
Heaven*