

THE HEARTHSTONE

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For the "Hearthstone."
EARTHLEND.

BY DR. NORMAN SMITH.

I love the sunny earthland,
In vernal robes arrayed,
Its lofty cloud-capped mountains,
Each forest hill and glade;
The fertile banks and dells,
Each grassy dell and lea,
And all of nature's beauties
Have such a charm for me.

I love the broad blue ocean,
With mighty crashing waves,
Rolling in crested billows,
O'er briny, coral caves,
I love the laughing brooklets
That murmur on their way,
O'er beds of tiny pebbles,
Through flow'ry meads of hay.

I love the sweet wild flowers,
With all their brilliant hues,
The rose-hued and the lilacs,
That drink the crystal dew;
I love to hear the songsters
Through balmy summer days,
'Neath shades of leafy willow-wood,
Warbling their merry lays.

I love the sunny earthland,
And when life's journey 'll close,
I'll close upon its bosom,
In dreamless sleep repose,
Till angels bear me upward
'Mid bright celestial bowers,
Where in beauty ever blossoming
Are sweet unfolding flowers.

(For the "Hearthstone.")

FROM BAD TO WORSE.

A TALE OF MONTREAL LIFE.

BY J. A. PHILLIPS.

CHAPTER III.

OUT OF THE CHURCH.

"Jessie; how long have you known Mr. Austin?"
Jessie looked up at her Uncle with a quick, inquiring glance, and answered promptly "about a month."

"Do you think it right or proper for a young lady to have clandestine meetings with a man she has only known a month, and whose acquaintance with her is at least a doubtful one? Where did you first meet him?"

"I met him—in—in" stammered poor Jessie, getting quite confused; and growing uncomfortably red in the face. Before she could finish the sentence, however, Frank came to her assistance in her usual prompt manner, by saying: "Charlie Benson introduced Mr. Austin to us, one afternoon when we were out walking."

"Oh! you know him too?"
"Certainly, and I think him a very pleasant fellow," said Frank, anxious to give Jessie a little time to recover.

Mr. Lubbeck stood a little in awe of his masculine niece, and in very wholesome dread of her doses and denunciations in the medical line; besides, he knew and liked Charlie Benson; and, he had, moreover, a high regard for Arthur Austin; therefore, he was disposed to view the matter very severely. Still he did not like to be too violent all of a sudden, so he preserved his grave manner and said addressing Jessie, "I do not approve of young ladies meeting young gentlemen in public places, and standing talking confidentially to them; it does not look well, and frequently gives occasion for unkind and unpleasant remarks. How did it happen that you met Mr. Austin alone?"

"I—don't know," faltered poor Jessie, feeling very much like a naughty child who feared punishment, "I was only—"

"Uncle," said Frank, cutting in suddenly, and speaking in her prompt, determined way, "it seems to me you are speaking very harshly to Jessie about a very simple matter; one would think that Jessie had been meeting Mr. Austin clandestinely, and by appointment; now I have been with her every time she has seen him—and it has only been three or four times, and then only for a few minutes walk—and she happened to be alone with him in the Square, because—because—" Frank hesitated a moment, blushed a little and continued—"because I left her in the Square for two or three minutes while I did an errand at Morgan's for mamma."

Frank omitted to state that it was on a former, and not the present, occasion she had so left Jessie.

"Oh, Frank!" exclaimed Jessie.
"Don't be a fool," said the brusque Frank sotto voce.

"You misunderstand me, Frank," said Mr. Lubbeck, rather overcome by his niece's volubility, "I do not object to a proper acquaintance between Mr. Austin and yourselves; I only took exception to the manner in which that acquaintance had been formed; but, don't let us say anymore about it; you girls are young and giddy, and I daresay no harm was intended on either side. I might say," continued Mr. Lubbeck, willing to make a little concession, "that I esteem Mr. Austin very highly; he is an exceedingly clever young man, steady, and undoubtedly a gentleman; I scarcely think you can derive any harm from an acquaintance with him, provided it is properly conducted and not allowed to go too far."

"So you know him too?" exclaimed Frank.

"Certainly, my dear, he is my book-keeper and confidential clerk; a very clever young man."

"Then, Uncle," said matter-of-fact Frank determined to make the most of the advantage she had gained, "if he is such a clever young man and you like him so much, why don't you ask him to come and see you? I'm very de-



THE WEDDING TOOK PLACE IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, AND WAS A VERY GRAND AFFAIR.

mocratic in some things you know, and I believe in employer and employee knowing each other socially as well as in business."

"Yes, my dear, but—" "Oh! you need not be afraid of me, I like men's society,—I wish I was a man, instead of a poor helpless woman,—but you need not fancy I shall fall in love with his handsome face, and fine moustache; and as for Jessie, if such a foolish notion gets into her head I'll give her a Soliitz Powder, and bleed her. So, Uncle, ask Mr. Austin and Charlie Benson to dinner on Sunday."

"Oh! it's Charlie? is it?"
"Don't be a silly old goose, but ask them like a good old fellow as you are."

"Mrs. Williams presents her compliments to Mr. Arthur Austin and requests the pleasure of his company to dinner on Sunday next at six o'clock."

It was a stiff, formal little note, but in Arthur Austin's eyes it was very precious, for he felt that Mrs. Williams never traced these fairy characters, and it was as much as he could do to restrain himself from pressing the writing, which he felt sure was Jessie's to his lips. He did not do anything so ridiculous, however, but, after a few moments thought walked into Mr. Lubbeck's private office, and handing the note to him said,

"I found that on my desk, a few moments since, sir."

"Yes, I put it there myself; and I beg to add my own request to that of Mrs. Williams that you will dine with us on Sunday."

"I shall be very happy, I assure you, sir—"

"Mr. Austin," said Mr. Lubbeck, gravely, "I have already told you, and have given you tangible proofs of my sincerity, that I have been highly pleased with your conduct since you have been with me. Our business relations have been highly satisfactory, but I feel, as my niece, Frank, expresses it that 'employer and employee should know each other socially as well as in business.' I think you get at each other's inner natures better over their dinner, I forgot a glass of wine.—Oh! I ask your pardon, I forgot you do not take wine, and quite right too—than in a year's business transactions together. I do not mind confessing that I desire to know you more thoroughly than I have done during the six months you have been with me, as I contem-

plate some business changes this fall which may render it necessary for me to be able to trust implicitly in you; I, therefore, hope to see you frequently at my house in future, and hope that our social relations may prove as satisfactory as our business ones have done. I wish, however, to be perfectly frank with you; you will of course be frequently thrown into the society of my nieces, whose acquaintance you have already made, now I do not object to an acquaintance, or even a friendship springing up between you; but there must be no idea of its ever being anything more. Frank, I am not afraid of, she's able to take care of herself and is more than a match for any man, unless he can stand unlimited experiments in medicine, and has the constitution of a horse; but, my little pet Jessie is scarcely more than a child, and I won't have anyone trying to stuff her head with nonsense for these many years to come. I am plain with you, because I want no misunderstanding in this matter. If you want to fall in love with anybody try Frank, she'll soon bleed and bluster you out of the idea. I have been so candid with you because you said you not only know, but 'admired' my niece; now get any such foolish notion out of your head at once, or it will lead to a disruption of all our relations business and otherwise. That will do; bring me the morning paper, and the letters."

Arthur Austin soon became a constant and welcome visitor at Mr. Lubbeck's; and grew steadily in favor, not only with the old gentleman, but with the whole family. Even Frank—who, although she liked the society of men, generally declared that the young men of the present day had no brains, and were decidedly 'flat'—declared that Arthur was "a brick," which was a great compliment from Miss Frank, and that he was "a fellow who knows something."

In fact Arthur was "a fellow who knew something"; he had received a first class education, had travelled a great deal, was naturally observant, and possessed that rare faculty of talking just enough to please and interest, but not enough to bore. He could sing tolerably well, possessing a fair voice, which he managed cleverly. He fairly captured Frank by his knowledge of medicine, and when he showed that young lady an experiment in electricity and very nearly resuscitated a defunct toad which had been poisoned while experimenting

on him the day before. Miss Frank's admiration knew no bounds, and she almost threw her arms round him and kissed him for joy; but contented herself with slapping him on the back and saying, "that's first rate, old fellow!" Arthur was certainly very attentive to Frank, and, strange to say, Mr. Lubbeck seemed to like it; Arthur and Frank used to have a good many arguments on medical and other topics—Frank was every inch a man in her love of argument—and the old man would sit and listen, nodding approval, and occasionally putting in a word. At first he used to keep Jessie by him; but Arthur tried hard to keep his implied promise to Mr. Lubbeck, and severely spoke to that young lady, except the most commonplace civilities. After a little while Frank discovered that Arthur played chess and claimed him frequently for a game, while Jessie either sat quietly by pretending to do some fancy work, or would steal off to the piano and play over old-fashioned airs softly to herself. Although they met frequently now, Jessie and Arthur really had less opportunity of speaking to each other than when he and Charlie Benson used to meet; Frank and Jessie for little pleasant walks; each seemed to avoid the other, for Jessie felt hurt that Arthur did not pay her more attention, and Arthur was very careful to pay attention, if possible, to Mr. Lubbeck's warning, Try as he would, however, it was no use; the more fact of her presence, a turn of her head, a glance of her eye would attract his whole attention at once; when he was playing chess with Frank at one end of the room and Jessie was sitting at the other, he would bend all his attention to catch the lowest murmur of her voice, or the softest note she touched. Often Miss Frank would take him to task for his absent-mindedness; and numerous were the penalties that young lady offered for his thoughts without having her store of pocket money reduced.

About six weeks after Arthur had paid his first visit to Mr. Lubbeck's he was sitting one evening playing chess with Frank with Mr. Lubbeck looking on and Jessie sitting softly to herself; Mrs. Williams was not very well and had excused herself after dinner; presently a servant came in to speak to Mr. Lubbeck about one of the horses having gone lame, and he went out to consult with the groom. Jessie had been sitting very softly, so softly that Arthur had been unable to catch a word; but as

her uncle left the room she raised her voice a little and sang clearly and distinctly a scrap of a simple little ballad:

Have you forgotten the stroll of the fountain;
Have you forgotten the path o'er the lea;
Have you forgotten those days on the mountain;
Have you forgotten them all, with them me?

Arthur sat idly listening while the simple strain lasted, foolishly holding his Queen in his hand, and at last making the very worst move on the board, putting it immediately in the way of Frank's Queen; that young lady promptly withdrew the unhappy Queen, and crying "checkmate," rose from the table saying: "Mr. Austin you don't seem to care about playing chess to-night, and I want to read; make yourself useful by turning over Jessie's music for her." She threw herself into an easy chair, and took up a book, but she did not read; the book was only intended as a blind under the cover of which she might observe what was going on at the other end of the room. The fact is Miss Frank had noticed Arthur's absent manner, his want of attention to Jessie's singing, and his eager watching of her every movement, and she made a pretty good guess as to the state of his feelings. Don't suppose Frank felt the least bit jealous, she liked Arthur Austin very much, he was a sensible fellow, could talk well and had many tastes and pursuits in common with her, but Miss Frank never for one moment fancied herself in love with him; in fact she was more in love than she cared to confess, with someone else, and it was as much to please that someone else, as anything, that she had thrown herself in Arthur's way so much. So she quietly watched behind her book and awaited developments.

Arthur snatched as unconcernedly as he could up to the piano, and leaning over Jessie said:

"Will you please sing that 'Have you forgotten' again, it is so sweet."

"I'm sorry I interrupted your game of chess, Mr. Austin, pray do not let me disturb you."

"I was only too glad to be interrupted so pleasantly, Miss Jessie; won't you, please, repeat that song?"

"Frank will expect you to finish your game," said Jessie rather spitefully.

"Miss Frank herself gave up playing, and desired me to come and turn over your music."

"Have you quarrelled with Frank?"
"Certainly not, what could make you think so?"

"When people who are so fond of each other, and are so much together suddenly separate it looks—"

"It looks," continued Miss Jessie, "as if they had just parted, and I don't know how they had had a lovers' quarrel," she finished desperately, savagely intoning the "lovers'."

"Lovers' quarrel! why Miss Jessie what on earth can you mean?"

"Why you and Frank are so much together, and so much—that everybody—well it looks as if—"

"said Jessie, with a rising sensation in her throat, and tears almost starting into her eyes.

"You never thought, Miss Jessie, did you?" said Arthur leaning earnestly over her.

"Why, of course, I—"

"Jessie, darling, how could you fancy such a thing, I admire your sister, of course, because she is my sister; but you must have seen, must know, altho' I have never told you in words, that I love you, never can love anyone but you. I know I have acted strangely of late, but I was forced to it by a feeling of respect to the wishes of your uncle, who almost made me promise to avoid you. I tried, tried hard to tear you from my heart, darling, but it was impossible, the more I tried the more I loved you, Jessie, I am only a clerk, and shall lose my head through admiration by this step, but I have health and strength and with the hope of your still to cheer me on I will succeed. Will you give me one word of hope, one smile to show me I am not wholly indifferent to you?"

"And you don't love Frank?" said Jessie, bending over the piano until her glowing face was almost hidden by her falling hair.

"No one but you, darling; Oh! Jessie will you give me one word, one look, will you promise one day to be my wife?"

"Jessie said nothing, but raised her eyes, swimming with happy tears to his, her cheeks glowing with burning blushes, and a bright smile playing around her lips. She half rose from the piano stool and in another moment Frank had clasped her to his heart and imprinted a burning kiss on her glowing lips.

"Hello!" exclaimed Miss Frank, bringing her book down on the table with a bang which caused the lovers to spring apart, and Jessie to run over to her sister and hide her face on her shoulder.

"This is more than I bargained for; I did not think matters had gone as far as that."

"Oh! Frank," half sobbed Jessie "I'm so sorry—and I'm so happy—and Arthur didn't mean—"

"I hope, Miss Frank," said Arthur, "that my conduct of late has not deceived you; I know it it was wrong, but I promised your Uncle to avoid Jessie, and I hope—"

"That I haven't fallen in love with you? Make your mind easy on that score; I like you very well, you're a sensible fellow and will make a first rate brother-in-law, I think you are just suited for Jessie, and I give my consent."

"But your Uncle?"

"Oh, he's very fond of Jessie and won't want to part with her, but he'll get over it. I'll manage him, if I have to give him a dose of physic to make him sick."

Frank was as good as her word, and succeeded much easier than she expected. Mr. Lubbeck held out for a little while and required as conditions to his consent that Jessie should not leave him, but Arthur came and lived with them; and, also that the wedding should not take place for a year to both of which proposals Frank unconditionally surrendered.

Before Mr. Lubbeck finally gave his consent to Jessie's marriage, he wrote on to New York to an old confidential friend, and had private inquiries instituted as to Arthur Austin's antecedents.