

MY LOVE AND I.

I find it sweet to think of her,
Who seldom thinks, perchance, of me;
For many lovers find her fair,
And many rivers seek the sea.

I find it sweet to think of her,
For thoughts by day bring dreams by night,
Wherein no sorrow comes to shade
Or shadow my supreme light.

I find it sweet to think of her
And of her words I found so sweet;
And, like a charm to lull my care,
My lips their music still repeat.

I find it sweet to think of her,
Whose gracious praises make me strong
To win the crown those poets wear,
Whose love and passion speak in song.

I find it sweet to think of her,
And, through the ashen autumn days,
A sense of peace pervades the air
Though leaves strew thick the woodland ways.

I find it sweet to think of her,
And, though my heart may haply break
When hope surrenders to despair,
The pain were sweet for her sweet sake.

I find it sweet to think of her,
Who sometimes thinks, perchance, of me—
Though many lovers find her fair,
And many rivers seek the sea.

J. B. EASTWOOD.

THE COLONEL'S MISGIVINGS.

Colonel Francis Chester stood in moody silence before the fire which lit up the old hall at Chester-Royal. He was about thirty-five years of age, tall and strong of limb, with straight, good features, and flashing, black eyes. He ought to have been a happy man. This old hall and fine estate were all his own, his lineage was good, and assuredly of all the Chesters who had ruled at Chester-Royal, Francis was the proudest and most highly honoured of them. As a soldier, he was counted one of the most efficient in the service; his regiment—the scarlet Lancers—was one of the best managed in the army; his officers loved him; and his superiors held him up as a pattern to be safely followed. His men would go—and many of them had gone—through fire and water for him.

It was told of him during the Mutiny—that terrible year when so many of our nearest and dearest perished in the far East—that one of his soldiers had been heard to say, "Cornet Chester never tells us to 'Go on,' he always cries 'Come on!'" Now that he commands his regiment, his men have the same faith in him still.

And yet Francis Chester did not look happy. He was not happy.

He was dressed for dinner, and rapidly the hands of the clock neared the hour of seven that New Year's Eve. Frank thought of the old year with feelings in which joy and pain were strangely mingled. To the one that was coming, he looked forward with a shudder of dread.

As he stood twisting his long moustache, with strong, brown fingers, the "clac-clac" of high heels on the *parquet* floor of the gallery which ran round three sides of the hall, roused him from his reverie. He glanced upwards; his face flushed, then grew as suddenly pale; his eyes brightened, then sank to the fire again, their flashing brilliancy dimmed by hot, regretful tears. The unknown cause of this emotion came down the stairs and stood beside him—a wee, fragile little girl of seventeen, dressed in violet velvet, with swansdown trimmings, a costume which set off her fair, regular profile and long flaxen curls to perfection. Her name was Nelly Drummond, and she was Colonel Chester's ward. Her father and he had been comrades and inseparable friends, though Major Drummond was ten years Frank Chester's senior. Nelly lived with Mrs. Grahame, Frank's sister, who was at present doing the honours of the house. Mr. Grahame was a barrister of great renown, and had come with his whole family on a visit to his brother-in-law.

Nelly came to Colonel Chester's side, and put out her pretty white hands to the warm blaze.

"How cold it is, Colonel Chester!" she said, shyly.

"Very!" he answered. "Have you been taking care of yourself, and keeping out of drafts, my dear? I almost feared that damp church for you! They had been re-arranging the decorations for a festival."

"I did not stay very long. Mrs. Grahame saw me shiver, and sent me home. At least, I went round to the station for her."

"Did Derrick Valentine go with you?"

He spoke with an effort. He thought her shy constraint was cold dislike, and made his tone as fatherly as possible.

"Yes."

"And did you enjoy your walk?"

"It was very cold," she answered evasively, the hot blood flooding her fair face and throat.

Frank's heart was throbbing in agony. The great veins stood out like thick cords upon his temples. Yet he forced himself to go on.

"I suppose he has been telling you the old story, Nelly. He asked my consent this morning. I said I must leave it to you. And now, child, am I to wish you every happiness?"

A footfall above warned him of intruders, and Nelly escaped into the deserted morning-room, leaving Frank with a dull pain at his heart, that told him the worst had come.

Poor Frank did not eat much dinner that evening. How could he, with Nelly and Derrick Valentine close beside him? He thought they did not look very happy; and that, had he been engaged to Nelly, he would not have been so red and uncomfortable as Derrick Valentine

certainly was. Engaged to Nelly! Ah! the very thought sent the blood leaping and thrilling through his veins, only to bring the bare truth back to him in all its hideousness, that Nelly Drummond must never be anything more to him than his ward; that in a few months she would be married to his subaltern, and he would have the pain of seeing her daily. Ah! well; it would soon be over. Never must he dream of her again as he had done so often of late, standing by his side, flushing under the cloudy bridal veil; wandering in golden honeymoon days, through Alpine splendours, and still Italian cities; watching her amaze at gay Parisian life, and brilliant German spas; coming home, a tender, happy wife, to Chester-Royal; arranging balls and parties; turning out the wardrobe of his ancestresses in quest of theatrical costumes; filling the old house with light and life; taking her place as lady of the regiment; returning with him on dark November evenings from the hunting field; coming to meet him on his return from the barracks; fastening his precious cross "For Valour" on his tunic; sitting beside him in the church; lying in the dim twilight, with a baby on her bosom—his child! No! never any more. Ah! how pretty she was! What tender, caressing ways she had! But they were for another, and Francis Chester must live out alone the life given him!

When the ladies left the table, Colonel Chester rose to open the door. Nelly cast a piteous glance at him. "Your head aches?" she asked, inquiringly.

"A little," he answered, trying to smile. If he had spoken the truth, he would have told her it was more headache than headache that ailed him.

In a very short time the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room. Frank, however, went up to his own room before doing so. As he passed the great bay window in the gallery, he caught a glimpse of a velvet skirt, while the unmistakable sound of a sob fell upon his ear. He pushed aside the curtains which shrouded the recess, and saw little Nelly in deepest distress.

"My child," he said, sitting down on the broad window-seat beside her, "why these tears?"

You who should be so happy!"

"Oh, no, no!" she sobbed.

"No," cried he. "Not happy in Derrick Valentine's love? He loves you very much, Nelly!"

"I know!" she whispered.

"And does that not make you happy?"

She shook her head.

"Then why have you engaged yourself to him?" asked Frank, in astonishment.

"I have not!" she said, half indignantly.

"I told him this afternoon I could not; that I—"

"Liked some one else better," said he, finishing her sentence for her.

Nelly did not answer; only her pretty blonde head drooped lower and lower against his shoulder.

"Who is it, Nelly? Some one we do not know of, my sister said. Not tell me, child?"

"I cannot tell you!" she cried, passionately.

"Cannot tell me?" How strangely dull and unseeing Colonel Chester was becoming! "Is it possible there can be any secret where you are concerned? Oh, Nelly, Nelly, I would rather you died than such be! Recall your decision, and let me send Derrick to you. He loves you, and your affection will grow for him!"

Nelly had risen as he spoke. "Colonel Chester," she cried, her face white, her large blue eyes wild and dark with pain, "you are cruel to me—cruel, cruel to me! And I am so great a drag upon you that you give me to a man I do not, can never love?"

Here she left off abruptly; and, turning, fled away down the corridor to her own apartment.

Colonel Chester's headache and heartache had alike vanished. As he went down the gallery, his only sensation was that of intense happiness.

"What courage she has!" thought he. "How she blazed up; and how like poor Drummond she looked; and how nicely she let the cat out of the bag, dear little girl!" And then Frank wandered away into the old dreamland, which, two hours back, he had renounced for ever.

When Nelly descended into the drawing-room, Colonel Chester was talking to his sister by the piano. She came gently in, and sat down on a low fauteuil near the conservatory door. She sat looking down the long room, fanning herself with a huge fan, whose scented movement lifted the fair curls and fluttered the soft swansdown trimmings of her dress. But all her little airs and graces could not hide from Mrs. Grahame's quick observation the fact that she was as pale as death, and trembling from head to foot.

"What is the matter, Nelly?" she asked, coming across the room.

"Nothing."

"But you look as if you were going to faint; and you have been crying!"

Nelly flushed crimson.

"I'm all right, aunty" (she sometimes called her "aunty"); "I had a fright upstairs. Please don't take any notice." And Mrs. Grahame, fully believing in the legends and traditions of the old house, went on her way quite sure that Nelly had seen a ghost.

A few moments after, a man servant came to Nelly.

"Colonel Chester wishes you to go to him in the library, Miss Drummond," he said.

"Say I am very sorry I cannot come," she answered, decisively, in the same time beckoning a young man to her side.

When Frank returned to the room, he found

Nelly occupied with a decided flirtation, though she was still as pale as death. She would not look at him, nor show by the least sign that she knew he was in the room. Presently she was asked to sing, and rose at once, too proud to show by refusal how she was suffering. Someone asked for "Marguerite," and she began it. She knew Frank was standing beside her. She could see his strong, brown hand, with its heavy signet ring resting on the piano. She sang the song splendidly. At the words,—

"Oh, Marguerite, I think I know,
I feel he loves me too;
But if, alas! it be not so,
I prithee tell me true."

her voice shook ever so little, and gradually she wound up to the last, a thrilling, prolonged note.

A burst of applause followed, and then came a hush, for Nelly was lying in Colonel Chester's arms in a dead faint.

The next morning, Nelly rose whilst the rest of the household was at church. When she was dressed, she went down to the library to fetch the second volume of a novel she was reading. When she opened the door, she saw Colonel Chester sitting at the table, writing. She tried to draw back, but he had seen her, and called out, "Nelly, I want you." Then she came in, looking rather defiant, and very much frightened.

Frank rose and took her hand.

"Are you better this morning?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Why did you not come to me last night, when I sent for you?"

No answer.

"Did you know what I wanted to say to you?"

"No," in the meekest of small whispers.

"Then why did you not see me?"

"Because I thought you were going to scold me," she answered, looking up, her eyes full of tears.

"I scold you, my precious!" murmured Frank tenderly. "Ma reine blanche, when I scold you—"

"Don't," said Nelly; "I've been ill, you know, and I'm not to be agitated. If you talk like that, I shall begin to cry. But Frank, what a pretty name Reine Blanche is! You should hear my name for you."

"What is it?"

"If I tell you, then you will know."

"Of course I shall. Come, tell me!"

"Imperative mood," laughed Nelly.

"Shall we make it conditional?" suggested Frank. "You tell me your name for me, and I will tell you one I have for you, which is ten thousand times the loveliest on earth."

"Mon Brave," said Nelly, curiosity getting the better of her. "Now for yours!"

"My wife!"

When Colonel Chester and Miss Drummond descended from the heaven which is one degree higher than the sixth, he tried to give her a little good advice.

"Derrick goes to-morrow."

"Poor dear!"

"Now don't you think he would be the better match of the two? He is ten years handsomer than I am, almost as rich, very much younger, and—"

"I am not going to flatter you, Frank, however much you may desire or deserve it; but I should like you to understand now and for ever that I don't like 'raw material.'"

Colonel and Mrs. Chester are quite a model couple, and about a year after their marriage, their happiness was completed by the arrival of a son and heir. Nelly says he is the loveliest baby that ever was brought into this sublunary sphere, and that he is the exact image of his father. Would you believe that Colonel Chester is conceited enough to take the compliment to himself?

THE FRENCH STATUE FOR NEW YORK HARBOR.

A Paris correspondent writes that a meeting of the members of the committee of the Franco-American Union, the organization which has taken in charge the plan of presenting to the people of the United States a colossal statue of Liberty, to be erected in New York Harbor, was held on February 2, at the rooms of the society, 10, 172 Rue St. Honoré, Paris. M. Laboulaye presided, and there were present besides M. Bartholdi, the sculptor, who has designed the statue; the Marquis de Rochambeau, M. de Lafayette, Comte Serrurier, M. Jean Macé, M. A. Caubert and others. Mr. Gratiot Washburne, in the absence of his father, who is an honorary member of the committee, was there, and Mr. Nathan Appleton was also asked to attend the sitting. M. Bartholdi read a very interesting report showing the progress of securing subscriptions in France, which amounted now to about 140,000 francs, while many of the towns in France have not yet given an answer to the appeal made to them, and many of the subscription books are still out, and the amount obtained therefore not definitely known. This is certainly a very encouraging report, and with such a start there should be no great difficulty in securing the amount required. M. Bartholdi is to come to America some time this spring, taking with him the arm of the statue, to be exhibited at Philadelphia, and he hopes that the corner stone of the pedestal will be laid on the 4th of July with appropriate ceremonies. It is now for the people of the United States to be ready for their share of the work.

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