

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

A Bunch of May Blossoms.

I walked through the lanes in the country,
On Nature's green carpet so new;
Here and there grew a sweet little flower,
Whose lips had been kissed by the dew.
I paused, as I walked 'long the roadway,
O'ershadowed with tall waving pines,
And I listened—the notes of the song birds
Recalled my thoughts of far, distant chimes.
I plucked from a tree by a gateway,
A branch of May blossom so white,
Beside, bloomed a sweet little primrose,
Whose petals unfold with the light,
But I cull'd it—that pretty wee flower,
With my blossoms I carried it home,
Away from its many companions
To my cot by the wild sea foam.
I gathered a fern by the wayside,
Little corn-flowers too, I espied,
So I plucked them, along with the others
So sweet did they look, side by side—
The May blossom next to the corn-flowers,
Then the pretty wee primrose and fern;
To complete the bouquet I sought grasses,
Which grew on the banks of a burn
I sauntered along with my flowers,
So pretty and innocent they;
While I gazed at the one and the other
I thought—Oh how lovely is May.
I fastened them then with a ribbon,
Which I took from my hair—it was blue;
I carried them home, for 'twas evening,
And my flowers had been kissed by the dew.

HAZELKIRK.

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

"Dolly a Memory."

BY H. E. D.
CHAPTER I.

INNER parties are rare events at York Factory. Once a year only, do the combined forces of her Majesty's Most Honorable Hudson Bay Company turn out in gala attire, to eat, drink, and be merry. And on such high and notable occasions, we know to a nicety Dolly and I, every detail of the entertainment.

First, I say, running over the list, "father will lead off with Lady Kilgrath, which honor is al-

ways accorded her in consideration of the defunct Kilgrath having been at one time Governor of the Company."

"And it goes without saying," breaks in Dolly, with an assurance born of long experience, "that she will wear the purple moire antique, a funeral head-dress of nodding ostrich plumes, and a mourning hair bracelet to which she will be sure to allude before dinner is over, and as it is not a case 'where with long use her tears are dry.' She will weep copiously, and father will console her by telling her he is better off. So are we, for that matter, he might add, since father stepped into his shoes."

"Then," I proceed, "Colonel Campbell will follow up with the eldest Miss McGillvary, 'mutton dressed as lamb,' and I predict that it will be upon one of these festive occasions, that the Colonel will succumb, and the eldest Miss McGillvary will cease to exist."

"Then it will be only because 'black death veils her eyes,' as they say in Homer," returns Dolly with scornful dissent. "But to return nearer home have you any idea whom fate intends for me?"

"Why, Dick, of course," I reply, slightly amazed at the question, "it is my lot that trembles in the balance, but I think I can describe the new man beforehand by intuition. He is a French engineer, you know, a member of Liecole Polytechnique, middle aged and short, with a heavy, grizzled moustache, sharply waxed at the ends. In all probability he will wear a single glass, through which he will survey your humble servant, with outward admiration and inward scorn, and a ribbon of some honorable, though unknown, order will adorn his buttonhole. He may even condescend to bestow upon me during the repast, a few ancient and well turned compliments, which not being gifted with the power of brilliant *repartee*, will cover me with confusion as with a garment. But when he returns to the seclusion of his own room, he will say with a yawn, *Sacre Chien!* that affair was a trick."

"Then since you have decided that you will both be mentally bored, why not hand him over to me?" says Dolly with suspicious eagerness.

"But what about Dick?" I return, considerably dismayed at the proposition, "he will be so very disappointed you know, he has been looking forward to taking you into dinner."

"That is just it," replies Dolly, slowly, "he always expects to be with me everywhere, and to tell the truth Nan, I am tired of Dick. Wait a minute," she goes on, before I can find voice to reply, "I know exactly what you are going to say, 'he is a dear, good boy,' and I suppose what the world calls an eligible *parti*. But all this unceasing devotion wearies me to death, and what makes it worst of all is that everyone seems to take it for granted that we belong to each other."

"Then you mean to throw him over," I say with a gasp.

"If you choose to call it that," returns Dolly, coolly, "though I cannot see that I am to blame, if Dick Carmichael chooses to delude himself with ideas that never had any foundation except in his own imagination, and now!" with a sudden change of tone, "you will take him off my hands for one night won't you dearest?"

"You will repent it," I say warningly, "and probably find the Frenchman many shades worse than I painted him."

"Age cannot daunt me," returns Dolly, valiantly, "neither can stupidity or ugliness, all I crave is indifference."

CHAPTER II.

As we file into dinner, I catch a glimpse of Dolly, but truly my ideal Frenchman dwelt only in my imagination; very unlike the reality with his young, dark, clear cut face, and gay audacious blue eyes, that are looking down, now filled with admiration, at the pretty face beside him, with its crown of gold-brown hair. Such a bewitching, vivacious Dolly, with red lips parted with laughter, and eyes alight with mirth. And as he catches sight of them, Dick's boyish face darkens, and his answers to my questions grow so distant, that I am at last reduced to silent observations upon the people who sit around.

"The forty feeding as one." Lady Kilgrath has not yet arrived at the lachrymose stage, and is discussing a *paste de fois gras*, with the leisurely enjoyment of an epicure. The combined effects of heat and champagne have added materially to the naturally real hue of her complexion, causing me to make an inward resolution on the spot, that if my countenance ever arrives at that rubicund state in the years to come, never to wear a gown that harmonizes with it so painfully well. Perhaps though she goes on homeopathic principles, *similia similibus curantur*. Miss McGillvary is attired in a pink frock, and really looks quite pretty, a fact that the Colonel has not failed to observe, for never before have I seen him half so devoted, so that I really will not be surprised if matters come to a climax this very evening, notwithstanding Dolly to the contrary. That is if old Macdonald, the chief factor, does not spoil sport, by continually interrupting their conversation. He has taken in Mrs. Hamilton, our Bishop's wife, and being an exceedingly profane old reprobate, has told, I fear, his plain unvarnished tale, regardless of his auditor, for that lady has turned her back upon him as much as is possible under the circumstances, and is gazing in marked disapprobation at Dolly. Presently, however, curiosity gets the better of her indignation.

"Can you tell me," she inquires, in a chilly tone, of her offending partner. "Who is the young man with whom Dorothy Howard is conversing, in that forward and boisterous manner?"

"Gad, they do seem to be enjoying themselves," returns the old fellow with a chuckle, putting up his glass and surveying the offending pair. "His name is Raoul de Beaufour, his father Count Guy belonged to the Chasseurs, used to know him in Quebec fifty years ago. Fine fellows those Madam, none of your goody, good milk-sops, who hardly dare call their souls their own, with their White Cross Leagues, and temperance societies. Gad Madam, if I had a son he should sow his wild oats like a gentleman, or I would disown him, time enough to settle down to dealing out soup and flannel petticoats, when one reaches our age."

But alas! a wall of heaving, black satin again confronts him, and to the back of a head, bristling with wrath, and righteous indignation, he must address all further conversation. Were it not for the look of utter misery in Dick's grey eyes, I could have found the company intensely amusing, as it is I am glad when the affair is over, and I find myself in my own room, where Dolly and I, in dressing gowns and slippers, go over the thing from start to finish.

"I thought it perfectly delightful," says Dolly with a tired little sigh of content, as she lies back in an arm chair, and clasps her hands behind her head. "Didn't you Nan?"

"I can't say that the wild hilarity of it went to my head," I return coolly, "my most lasting remembrance of it will be a stiff neck which I have acquired from somebody's leaving a window behind me open."

"Now, don't take that aggressive tone if you love me," continues Dolly, pleadingly, "because when you get into that mood you always shut the flood gates of my conversation, and I have so many interesting things to tell you."

"Well, go on!" I say in a slightly mollified tone, "but let me tell you before hand, that I don't admire the new man, and you evidently do."

"I told him about your description of him," returns Dolly with a gay laugh, "and it amused him immensely. He is coming over to-morrow to meet you; he has taken Jack Bellhouses shanty, so fortunate it was empty he says, because it is only about a mile from the fort, and he wants to come over often."

"I wish it were fifty," I reply, indignantly, "and I hate foreigners, especially Frenchmen."

CHAPTER III.

Nearly four months have elapsed since the night of the dinner, and winter is almost over. When to justify the old Italian proverb that "Women and weather are things never to be depended on." The worst storm of the season breaks upon us. At four o'clock it has grown quite dark and the wind has risen to a perfect hurricane, inky black clouds are driven across a leaden sky and the forest moans and shivers before a blast in which the largest pine trees bow like sapling.

As I stand by the window watching the progress of the storm, our Indian servant Batish comes in and enquires with an anxious face, whether my sister has returned, and then I remember for the first time, that immediately after our early dinner, Dolly started off with the dog train.

"*N'inquietiez vous Mamselle,*" continues the kind-hearted fellow. *Avec deux chiens comme ar/volant et Luna, Elle ne peut fait mal.* But as in mockery of his word, the wind shrieks round the building, making every window rattle in its casement and my heart grows heavy with indifinable dread.

Suddenly a thought strikes me, Raoul de Beaufour has not been to the Fort for ten days, and we heard he was ill, perhaps she has gone over to hear how he is. The distance is nothing, as we have often gone much further on snow shoes, and the dogs would know their way home blindfolded, but to be out in the forest alone in this storm and darkness.

But even as we watch, the keen eye of the Indian has discerned a black object coming swiftly across the snow, and a moment later he is out in the tempest cheering on the dogs.

It is not until she is lying in her own room, heaped with rugs and furs which I have piled upon her, that Dolly at last opens her eyes.

Such a wan white face, with woeful eyes that gaze up desolately into mine. "He has gone," she says wearily, "back to France; something told me I should never see him again, and I had to go. You are not angry Nan?"

"Angry, oh my darling; but I only gaze dumbly at the face from which all the youth and gladness has fled forever."

"He left last week," she continues, quietly raising herself on the pillow, and gazing steadily out into the darkening night. "But you must not blame him, Nan; he left a letter explaining everything. You may read it if you will."

Mechanically I take the paper from the small chill hand, and note as a thing to be observed, the crest of pierced heart, with the motto below in old Norman French, "Und foy, und roy, und amoy." "Hearts dearest," it runs "forgive me that I dare not say farewell, but one sight of your sweet face, and all my resolution to say adieu would banish. Years ago I was betrothed to my cousin, the Countess Marie Louise de Chamfret, who is now completing her education in France. This year it will be finished and the month of May is fixed for our marriage. You will never know the terrible struggle it has been to leave you like this; but even if I had thrown honor to the winds I would not only have ruined my own prospects, but also those of my younger brothers and sisters to whom my marriage will be of material advantage. You I suppose will marry the young Englishman, who is so devoted to you, but sometimes in your happiness give a thought to one who adores you hopelessly and forever. RAOUL GUY DE BEAUFOUR."

Such a poor, pitiful, letter to break a heart! but she holds out her hand feverishly for the paper.

"He could not help it you see," she says patiently, and after all, with a wan triumphant smile, "It is me whom he loves, no matter whom he marries."

CHAPTER IV.

Years have passed away since that dreary winter day, and life at York Factory, is now only a memory of a long dead youth. In a crowded London drawing-room, some one is singing a gay French chancon, and as the words ring out, the scene before me fades away, and in its stead rises an old storm fort belted round with dark pine trees, which far away stretching into illimitable distance ripples and gleams the blue waters of the pacific. And the old refrain is sung by lips that have long been hushed to silence. Oh, my Dolly, very peaceful is your rest on that far off lonely shore, where the pines moan endless requiem over the quiet young sleeper whom the sorrow of "this weary unintelligible world" will never more oppress. But to-night I hunger for the vanished face, and the sound of the silent voice.

Have I conferred back the days of old, for as I look up with eyes dim with tears, there rises before me a bronzed familiar face, a face that belongs to the past, Dick! I say, stretching out eager hands half fearful the vision will vanish, "And so I have found you at last," he says, leaning back against the wall of the alcove, when I am seated. "For the last two weeks, ever since I heard that you and Mayor Pemberton had arrived in England, I have been searching for you everywhere, haunting clubs, theatres, and crushes great and small, that is what brought me here to-night for this sort of thing looking round the crowded room is not much in my line."

"I heard of your marriage when I was in India," he goes on, "and at Eversleigh, there is a box of huge dimensions, packed with odds and ends of tapestry, and stuff that I have collected for you from all parts of the globe." "But let me tell you," warningly, "that you will never cast your eyes upon it, if you do not give me your solemn promise here on the spot, that you and your husband will come back with me for the shooting season."

"Of course we will, I say gladly, you can't think how good it is to see you again, dear old boy." "By the way, if you live at Eversleigh, you must be Sir Richard Carmichael."

"Yes," he returns, laughing, "the years has given us both a new title Mrs. Nan."

"And when are you going to follow my example," I enquire, curiously, "or have the towers already a mistress?" At my question a dark flush rises to the sunburnt face, and he turns away his head without a word. A moment later as if half ashamed of his brusqueness, he says slowly, speaking with an effort, yes, it has a mistress. You should hear her singing through the halls or see her in the twilight, coming down the old stair-case and sometimes in the evenings, she comes through the shadows a glimmering wreath and slips her hand in mine.

What would I do with a wife when I have Dolly. Oh, loyal, faithful heart whose love neither separation nor death can change. Yet even as he speaks a great pity fills my heart for dying she never gave him a single thought. I know he says simply, as though he reads what is passing in my mind that it was not me she loved.

But now that she knows and can judge between us. I who loved her always, alive and dead, and he who won her heart, only to break it, with as little compunction as one would pluck a flower and throw it aside. I think she will come to meet me as she used to do in dear old days, when she thought she had been unjust, and her arm through mine, and say with the old soft laugh, "Let us make up dear, and truly I am so sorry. There is a crush at the door and some one is coming in. It is the new French ambassador