

POETRY.

TWO SINGERS.

"Come, thou fount of every blessing!"
Twas a maiden sang the hymn,
And she sang it without ceasing,
With a voice that had a ring
Like the clear note of a bell—
Yet of feeling—not a trace.
"Come, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace!"
Yes, the face was fair to see,
But it gave not the impression
That the words which came so free
Were the heart's sincere expression.
"Teach me some celestial measure,
Sing by ransomed throats above,"
But she looked not for the treasure
Of her Lord's unchanging love.

II.
"Come, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace!"
Twas a woman, old and feeble,
Sang the words so full of praise,
Though the notes were cracked and broken,
And the eyes with age were dim,
Yet the eager face gave token
Of the faith that was within.

Alas, she trusted in Him wholly,
For she felt the need of Him;
And her spirit was so lowly,
As she crossed the blessed hymn,
So she sang, in happy measure,
Of the joys that were to come,
For she hoped by his good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

SELECT STORY.

YOUTH WINS.

"To think we all knew him when he was out at elbows," exclaimed old Mrs. Ward.
"Never exactly out at elbows," corrected pretty Mrs. Vivian in her habitual soft tones.
"Well, at all events, he had not a decent evening suit, as we all know," put in Miss Jones, who was secretly believed to be the oldest woman in Mme. Laroche's establishment.
"And he occupied a little cabinet au troisieime," continued Mrs. Ward, "and never drank anything but the vin comique of the table."
"Yet nothing is more sure than that Mr. Bernard is now Lord Merivale," said Mrs. Vivian.
"Then it's to be hoped he will pay madam's account," cried Miss Jones, "he's never been out of her debt since I can remember."
"I have settled madam's account, since that interests you," said a cold, quiet voice from behind.
"It shall had burst in our midst we could scarcely have been more struck with consternation. It was Lord Merivale himself who had spoken, and not one of us had seen him enter the saloon—not one of us even knew that he was in Paris. Old Mr. Frost, who had been quietly playing cards in a distant room corner with the equally aged Dr. Hauser, showed no sign whatever of having seen or heard anything, and caused an amusing diversion in the moment of silence which followed the "baptism" by saying in his usual old gentlemanly tones: "If fifteen, two, fifteen, four, and a pair, six."
Really these two old gentlemen were about the dearest mortals it has ever been my lot to know. Miss Jones remarked to me irreverently that it was her firm opinion that when the last trump sounded Mr. Frost and Dr. Hauser would remain in their graves, for they would never hear it.
One would think we had had enough surprises for one evening, but still another awaited us.
We had all laughed when Mr. Frost had broken in on the silence, and that helped to put everyone a little more at ease. Then Lord Merivale apologized for starting us, with remarkable good humor, considering what he had just heard, and addressing himself to Mrs. Ward, said that he had taken a box at the Porte St. Martin, and wanted his old friends to join him in an evening's enjoyment—all of us, if we would so far honor him. "I have a decent evening suit now," he added, with a comical smile. I had been partly sheltered from view by a large artificial palm which stood upon the grand piano.
"This is a lady here I have not the pleasure of knowing," said Lord Merivale to Madam Laroche, who had just entered the saloon. "I had thought we were all old friends; kindly introduce me, madam."
In a moment his lordship was bowing before me, and I had the intense mortification of hearing myself described in madam's voluble but not very correct English as "Miss Delaney, an English writer, yer' celebrate, who is here only one week."
"Please do not believe anything of the kind, Lord Merivale," exclaimed, feeling my cheeks grow hot from annoyance. I am an English scribbler, if you like, but not at all celebrated."
"If you had lived here as long as the rest of us, Miss Delaney, you would have found out that we are all celebrated who reside at Madam Laroche's," replied his lordship, with a fine smile.
I now regarded him more fully, and saw that he was still a young man. His expression was particularly debonair. His eyes were blue, and his light brown hair waved on his high, white forehead. For the rest, he wore a moustache, and his lips seemed invented to smile pleasantly.
I shall figure in this narrative merely as an outsider, and shall as far as possible record exactly what I heard and saw of a romance in real life during my sojourn at Mme. Laroche's boarding house. The house was and is still situated in the Rue—, which is near the Luxembourg Gardens, and a very comfortable place it was, as boarding houses go. Lord Merivale had, it appeared, made it a sort of headquarters for over ten years. Mr. Frost and Dr. Hauser had been there for fifteen years, while Mrs. Ward and Miss Jones had joined the circle seven and three years ago respectively.
I got my first definite information about some of these habits on this wise. Only Miss Jones and Mrs. Vivian seemed inclined to accept Lord Merivale's offer of a seat in his box at the Porte St. Martin. Mrs. Ward pleaded headache and I an obligation to correct some proofs. As regards the proofs, I soon made a resolve to slip up late to complete them in my own room, and thus get an opportunity to hear anything Mrs. Ward had to tell before she retired.
Mr. Frost and Dr. Hauser went to bed early, so it was not long after the departure of Lord Merivale and the two ladies that Mrs. Ward and I were alone that red velvet saloon.
Everything seemed to be red velvet in that room that wasn't gilt or mirrors. There was, however, one pre-eminently redeeming feature in this saloon—namely, an open English fire—a fact on which great stress was laid in madam's advertisement.
Near this fire Mrs. Ward and I seated ourselves while she read a letter, and after I had paid some trifling attentions to the old lady in the shape of a foot stool and cushions, she began to give me the information my curiosity craved, without any overture on my part.
"Lord Merivale, you know, my dear," she began (Mrs. Ward called me "my

dear" more to annoy Miss Jones than for any other reason, I believe).

"Lord Merivale really was dreadfully short of money till he came into the title and estates, which no one here ever thought he would, for there was two brothers between him and such happiness, as well as a father, whose vigorous tenacity of life was only equalled by his vigorous dislike of his third son, the present Lord Merivale." "What made Lord Merivale take up his abode here in the first place?" I interrupted.
"The comfort—at the price," replied Mrs. Ward, briefly, with a smiling smile at the simplicity of my question.
"And Mrs. Vivian?" I put in intergalically.
"Mrs. Ward smiled grimly.
"Mrs. Vivian," she said, "is, I fancy, the only person who is coming here now. All of us noticed his kindness to her when Mr. Vivian died—not that he was kind to any one he saw in trouble."
"He may also have the consideration not to forget the friends he had in the days of his poverty. He may not have come here to see any one specially," I ventured to remark.
"My dear, you may be a writer, but you don't know the world yet," was the withering rejoinder. "There are kindesses and kindnesses, and when a young man is very kind to a pretty woman, well it can have but one meaning."
"Then you think Lord Merivale has come awooing?" I inquired.
"Yes; and so does Miss Jones, or she wouldn't have gone to the theatre to-night. It must have cost her something, for her remarks being overheard, to accept a courtesy from his lordship."
"You think, then, that she went so as to give Mrs. Vivian an opportunity of going?" I asked.
"Not a bit of it," affirmed Mrs. Ward stoutly. "Miss Jones went out of pure contumacity. She felt sure those two would have preferred to be alone, so she went."
"But I exclaimed, "Mrs. Vivian surely would not have gone alone with Lord Merivale to the theatre."
"There you betray your want of knowledge of the world," said Mrs. Ward scornfully. "Mrs. Vivian would go anywhere with any one if she had enough to give."
"Well, if she is that sort of a woman it is perhaps a mercy she has no child," I assented with some vehemence.
"But she has a child—a little girl that her husband's mother is bringing up in England. She makes a moon about this child every now and then, and says how cruel it was of her husband to express a dying wish that their child should remain with his mother. He bound his mother in one way, nevertheless, for she stated in his will that Olive (she calls her Pussy) should not marry under age without her mother's consent, in which case she won't marry under age; but her mother has too much horror of becoming a grandmother."
"How old is little Olive?" I inquired.
"Well, my dear, she used to be 11, then she became 10—now she is 8. She will probably become a baby again in time."
I very much wanted to ask some more questions, but Mrs. Ward began to show signs of sleepiness, so I got out my proofs, and went on correcting them till Lord Merivale appeared with Mrs. Vivian and Miss Jones. Then Alphonse, our small page boy, brought a little supper tray. Mme. Sarah Bernhardt had surprised herself it seemed, as Theocrite that night, and both his lordship and Mrs. Vivian she has had a proposal for Pussy, most suitable in every way."
"A proposal for your little daughter?" I cried with an incredulous laugh. "Impossible. Why it savors of India. Your little girl is only 9 years old, isn't she?"
"She must be more than that," admitted Mrs. Vivian, reflectively. "To tell the truth I have quite lost the count. I was married when I was 10, and they took her away from me, and she thought me too much of a child myself to care for a lady properly, I suppose."
Here the pretty widow sighed. "I can't help wishing," she went on, with a sudden outbreak of confidence, "that it might be all settled between Lord Merivale and me before I am called upon to discuss this affair of Pussy's with my mother-in-law. If the person who wants to marry Pussy were only like Lord Merivale I would give my consent at once, for such a man would make her very happy."
"I fear we are keeping Lord Merivale waiting," I suggested, for I really felt I had nothing to say about Pussy's affair.
"Of that morning's visit to the Louvre I shall only record what has a bearing on after events."
We were in that gallery containing the Collection La Case, and were admiring the dresses in one of Watteau's pictures, when Lord Merivale observed: "When I look at these exquisite blues and pinks I always think it a great pity for women to wear black."
"And I am doomed to wear it!" sighed the widow.
"Not doomed," rejoined Lord Merivale, "and I venture to predict that an occasion shall arise when you shall demand the putting aside of this diabolical garb."
I was a few yards away by this time looking at a Rembrandt portrait, but I distinctly heard all this said.
"I suppose I must give up this dress soon day—for Pussy's sake," Mrs. Vivian murmured.
As I glanced toward them I observed a glad light spread itself over Lord Merivale's features.
"Yes, I was sure of it," broke in the young man excitedly. "You would do anything to add to your child's happiness."
"Anything," replied the widow fervently.
"Bless you for those words," said his lordship fervently, "they give me the courage to ask you to grant me a few moments alone with you this evening. I have a request to make to you—and your answer will render me either the happiest or the most wretched of men."
On the way home Mrs. Vivian whispered to me, "It is coming, dear Miss Delaney—to-night."
III.
At Mme. Laroche's we lunched at 2 o'clock. It wanted a quarter to that hour when I came down to the saloon after my walking dress. I was not a little surprised to find madam there with two strangers.
I was about to withdraw when madam's shrill voice cried, "You would do!"
"Tray do not go, Miss Delaney. This is Mrs. Vivian's daughter and madam, her grandmother."
I now observed the ladies in a bewildered fashion. The prim old lady in the stiff black silk was only what one might have expected Mrs. Vivian, Sr., to be, but could this tall, graceful young woman be "Pussy"? She was looking about 18, and was certainly even better looking than her pretty mother.
That pretty mother entered, before I had got over my astonishment, and appeared to be struck dumb for a moment. But speedily recovering herself, she embraced her daughter rapturously, exclaiming: "What a lovely girl!"
"And is my naughty, neglectful darning case at last her mother?"
"Then turning to the old lady, she ex-

tended both her hands—only one of which the grandmother took—and cried in her joyous trouble: "And you, dear Pussy's grandmother, are you not come to scold poor, silly little me, are you?"

"You know what I am come about," answered the old lady severely, "and I trust you will be sensible about it."
The widow turned again toward her daughter and said, "And does my Pussy think her little mother could refuse her anything, with her child's pretty eyes looking at her?"
There was no answer to this appeal, for Lord Merivale came in just then, followed by Miss Jones and almost at once by old Mrs. Ward.
Lord Merivale stood apart, turning the leaves of a journal which lay on a table near the door. He was very pale I noticed; and I thought I could guess the cause. He, too, had been deceived by Mrs. Vivian about this daughter, and his whole faith in his future bride was shaken.
It was the elder Mrs. Vivian who spoke, and there seemed to be in her face and voice the holding-up anger of years. Before she uttered a word, I knew, I felt, that she would say before us all what she had intended for her daughter-in-law's ear alone. And so she did.
"So, Adelaide, you are unchanged, I perceive," she cried with withering scorn. "You still cling to your vanity, and hold on to a vanquished youth at the cost of all a woman should hold dear. Do not think your words to your child—yes; your child whose first appealing cries stirred no maternal response from you. Do not think those words devoid of any more than the false bloom on your cheeks—the false light in your eyes."
Here Lord Merivale stepped forward, saying deprecatingly:
"My dear madam, I beg of you—"
He was not allowed to go on. The irate old dame meant to have her say, and went on, with a dignified wave of her hand toward Lord Merivale and Mme. Laroche, who was also about to interrupt.
"So, Adelaide, you will refuse your child nothing, now you say—well then, we will go, Olive—your mother consents to your marriage with Lord Merivale."
Mrs. Vivian uttered a scream and fell back—into the arms of little Dr. Hauser, who had just come in to look for Mr. Frost. To say that that respectable old gentleman was staggered is literally true, for, in addition to the mental shock of such an event as a lady falling unexpectedly into his embrace, the feeble old man felt his physical strength very unequal to the holding-up plan Mrs. Vivian and Lord Merivale came to his assistance only just in time to prevent an ignominious collapse.
"Let us go, Olive," cried her grandmother.
"First let me kiss my mother," Olive said in a trembling voice.
"No, I won't let you," her mother fairly screamed from the shoulder of Mr. Hauser, where her blonde head now reposed, "and you, Lord Merivale, never let me see you except good Dr. Hauser, and then she burst into hysterical peals of laughter.
"I think, Lord Merivale, that you have behaved very badly indeed to Mrs. Vivian," old Mrs. Ward observed with asperity. "We thought you were paying your address to her."
Lord Merivale looked from one to another in a bewildered way. Then he asked me if I had shared in this delusion. I frankly admitted that I had.
"It is a great pity," a great pity," his lordship rejoined slowly. "You see I wanted to win the mother's consent to let me marry her daughter. I must have bungled sadly, but I never dream of anything like this. I thought of Mrs. Vivian as Olive's mother; that was all."
Yes, that was all. Lord Merivale had been staying at a friend's country house where they took their grandmothers, and were also guests, and he had fallen in love with the bright young girl and she with him. Then the grandmother had told him that, according to her son's will, the consent of Olive's mother must be obtained, and she had said, "I will do all I can to see that you get the old lady had added, "I am too much afraid of having her own age guessed at if she has a married daughter."
"But she was always kind to me," Lord Merivale had answered. "I will run over to Paris and do my best to please her and then make my request."
The result of this plan the reader has seen. Olive Vivian did become Lady Merivale.
And her mother?
She married Dr. Hauser within a month!

NORWEGIAN ENGAGEMENT.

"Leap year reigns forever in this heathen land!" exclaimed an English tourist stopping in a Norway village. One Norwegian he had taken a liking to in Norway. From a young and a good natured Norwegian being present, who had just walked sixteen miles across the mountains. When the lady rode to go to her lodgings in an adjoining house the Englishman offered to escort her through the darkness.
She declined the offer, and in so abrupt a manner as to surprise him. When she had gone the Englishman asked the Norwegian if he spoke English. "Not much—only a few words," he answered. "Tell me what means that ring the lady wears." "She is going to be—how you call it?" asked the Norwegian, in scarlet perplexity. "Going to be married!" "Yes, yes!"
"But," continued the Englishman, "what is an ignorant of it the difference in your rings between married, unmarried, going to be married and never going to be married?"
"Oh, you will never tell that, said the Norwegian, laughing loudly. "We cannot mark the women in this country as you do, but they mark the men. Among us it is the man who wears the ring."
"Oh, I see? That is a new light!" said the Englishman, taking the man's large left hand, on whose fourth finger was a plain gold ring. "That is your wedding ring, then?"
"Nai, nai!" he replied laughing and blushing. "That means I have got to be married!"
"And then what becomes of it?"
"We put it on the right hand instead of the left," said the Norwegian, holding out his hand to bid the Englishman "God, nat."
Then, as he was closing the door behind him, he said in confidential tones, "Yes, that you see, lady who was talking to you is going to marry me next month."
Youth's companion.

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