

GOOD NIGHT.

By MISS LONDON.

Good Night!—what a sudden shadow
Has fallen upon the air,
I looked not around the chamber,
I know he is not there.
Sweetness has left the music,
And gladness left the light,
My cheek has lost its colour;
How could he say Good Night!
And why should he take with him
The happiness he brought?
Alas! such fleeting pleasures
Is all too dearly bought,
If thus my heart stop beating,
My spirits lose their tone,
And a gloom, like night, surround me,
The moment he is gone.
Like the false fruit of the lotos,
Love alters every taste;
We loathe the life we are leading,
The spot where we are placed;
We live upon to-morrow,
Or we dream the past again;
But what avails that knowledge?—
It ever comes in vain.—*Beautiful Poetry.*

THE YOUNG WAITRESS.

THE Universal coffee and dining establishment is situated in the heart of London, and although not in one of the most leading thoroughfares, yet its air is genial and inviting, for it had kept pace with the numerous improvements which have from time to time been effected in these places, and which have tended to render the London coffee-houses and dining-rooms of the present day very different things compared with the close, dingy, and ill-ventilated holes in which our unlucky forefathers were content to put up with the bad fare doled out to them at exorbitant charges. We have very little of this now. The modern London coffee-shop and dining-room is generally a smart, commodious, well-lighted affair; its tables well supplied with newspapers and magazines, and its attendants civil and good tempered. A very comfortable half hour can be spent in such a place, the existence of which is a real boon to those whose avocations compel them to dine away from home. "The Universal" was, when I knew it, clean and comfortable; its articles simple but good, and its charges decidedly moderate. The proprietor and his wife embodied the conditions looked for in a fair joint—fat and lean, the lady representing the former. The customers who used the upper, or dining-room proper, were respectable but miscellaneous tradesmen whose homes were a little way out of town, clerks, one or two foremen of large businesses, and a small sprinkling of professional men of limited incomes. At "The Universal" everything was conducted in the most respectable and orderly manner, the condition of the edibles never unsatisfactory, and the attention of the proprietors and the small boy who made himself generally useful, all that could be wished. But there was one person connected with the establishment who was the admiration of everybody, and that person was the waitress. Kitty Blake was a little body, decidedly good-looking; she had dark eyes, rosy cheeks, and a neat figure. Active as an ant, and as industrious as one, she could repeat in a breath the longest bill of fare, pointing out the things in prime cut, by the way, in the most captivating manner; silencing doubts, confirming hopes, and attracting the appetite. Scrupulously clean as everything was at "The Universal" that attribute seemed ever heightened by the presence of Kitty. Gown, apron, cuffs, were, to use a dining-room simile, always in apple-pie order. Kitty was a country lass of twenty or twenty-one years of age, who had come to London in the earnest desire to relieve her parents from the responsibility of her support. She had been in service, but through a long stay with a poisoned hand in an infirmary, had lost her situation. Unable to obtain employment in her native place, she had answered an advertisement put into the newspaper by the pro-

prietor of our dining-rooms, and gladly received the appointment of waitress thereat.

At first Kitty was a little awkward. She blundered in her orders occasionally, and once or twice, from mere nervous anxiety to please, deposited a portion of one gentleman's dinner upon another gentleman's lap. However, she soon got over her difficulties; and, if such a term may be applied to the softer sex, mastered the position in a month, and gave the greatest satisfaction. Among others who came to "The Universal" was a steady-going, simple-mannered young tradesman, John Gibson, an ornamental decorator. He was a clever fellow, was John Gibson. He had been an errand-boy, but, having a taste for drawing, had attended the evening classes at the school of design, where his talents soon attracted attention, and procured him a comfortable situation, until he set up in business for himself. From the first it struck me that John was more than favourably impressed with the waitress. His grey, earnest eyes always brightened as she approached him, and his attention seemed mostly divided between her and his dinner. His fork would pause half-way to his lips, while he directed his gaze after her as she glided towards the communicating tube to deliver an order, or returned from the lift with the article required. Yes; and upon one occasion so absorbed did he grow, that he actually ordered a second dinner, and never seemed to be aware of the fact till he pulled out his purse to pay. A very different thing happened when, through a cold in the chest, we once, for a brief space, lost the services of our fair attendant. John's appetite then so fell off, that he left the larger portion of his dinner upon his plate every day. When Kitty got well again she was welcomed by all; but the decorator, upon seeing her, warmly took her by the hand, and said he was glad that she had come back again, and in a lower tone hoped that she had brought his appetite with her, as he had missed it ever since she had been away. Kitty smiled and blushed, and John's honest manly face was radiant with delight. From this moment I could clearly see that the waitress and John Gibson regarded each other from a very friendly point of view indeed. Others came to the same conclusion as myself, for occasionally somebody would remark, just sufficiently loud for the lass to hear, that paperhanging was a lucrative business, or, that ornamental decorators were, as a class most respectable men, and always made good husbands. That the waitress was not displeased by these innocent banterings was evident, for although she would turn aside to hide her blushes, yet she invariably had a smile upon her face at the same time. After this had been going on for a few months, an old customer, though a young man, who had not visited "The Universal" during the reign of Kitty, suddenly, to the vexation and annoyance of several, made a re-appearance. The young man in question was a jeweller's shopman, a hard by—tall, pale, thin, and gentlemanly-looking at first sight; but, upon closer inspection, too much of what is vulgarly known as a swell to impose upon any intelligent Londoner for five minutes. A fluffy moustache was fostered upon his lip, whiskers had not yet put in the faintest appearance, and he parted his light, rather curly hair in the centre. His dress was showy, his manner patronising. He often had a silly smile upon his face, and he seemed to be on most excellent terms with himself. He was a young fellow who was rather calculated to take with the inexperienced. When he threw himself upon a seat, it was evident he felt that he looked imposing, and nothing less than the proprietor of a brougham; and when after dinner he took out his toothpick, flung open his coat, lounged back and exhibited his white waistcoat and gold chain, it was done with the air of £4,000 a-year, Three per Cents. Our simple, modest, little waitress seemed wonderfully impressed the first time she beheld him, and passed John Gibson to wait upon the new comer. The decorator looked a little surprised, but, of course, made no remark. In less than a week, Kitty's preference for the jeweller, Mr. Tinfoil, was obvious. Silly compliments were constantly upon his tongue, and the waitress seemed to take everything he said as honest admiration. His way of behaving was so offensive, that one or two outspoken customers

took upon themselves to drop a hint now and then upon good behaviour in public, but without any beneficial effect. It was a lesson in vanity to see that young man take up the newspaper and pretend to read, so that he might stick out his little fingers, which were encircled with showy rings; and conceit was never better personified than when Tinfoil glanced round the room to see if he were noticed, and then dropped the paper, making a revelation of white waistcoat and gold chain for the benefit of the company in general, and Kitty in particular. But now a change, a marked change, came over our little waitress. Still clean as ever, her nattiness began gradually to die out. Glaring colours and tawdry dresses, Cheap-Jack jewellery and flying ribbons, supplanted the simple adornment of a better day. John Gibson came to dine as usual, when business did not lead him from his shop, but he took no more notice of Kitty now than the merest stranger. His eyes never brightened and his face never beamed as of old.

One day, when he had purposely made his dinner an hour later, that he might not be compelled to witness the silly exhibitions of Mr. Tinfoil, he caught that young gentleman and Kitty in earnest conversation.

"I cannot accept it, sir," said the latter, in a very decided tone; and the other, with "Oh, very well!" thrust something into his waistcoat pocket, and went out.

It was that portion of the day when "The Universal" was always quiet, and John now found himself the only customer present. Having given his order, he took occasion to draw Kitty into conversation. He had said very little to her of late, but for all that retained a most genuine regard for her, and felt sincerely sorry at the alteration we had all witnessed. By a little dexterity he got to learn that the young man who had just left had been offering her that afternoon a gold brooch as a present; and further, had asked her to try and get a holiday that day week, to accompany him to the Derby. There was, perhaps, a little vanity in her confessing so much. She felt, most likely, to be noticed by one whom she considered so much a gentleman, very flattering to herself.

"I heard you refuse the present," said John, with something like satisfaction in his tone, "and I consider you acted very wisely. Of course, you don't intend going to Epsom?"

Her face coloured deeply as she replied—

"Well, I don't think there would be any harm. I have only had one holiday since I've been here; and mine isn't an easy place though I don't mind work."

"I'm sure you don't," returned the decorator; "a blind man might see that."

She smiled, and appeared pleased at his good opinion, but continued—

"I have heard so much of the Derby, I really should like to go for once; and Mr. Tinfoil is a nice gentleman, and so I think I shall ask for a holiday."

It was now John Gibson's turn to colour up. A few short pauses, he very gravely said—

"Kitty, mind what you are about."

As though he had not made any remark, she continued—

"Work, indeed! It's all work and no play here. Up at half-past six of a morning; doing about upstairs; and then after breakfast doing about downstairs; then getting the dining-rooms in order; then waiting all the rest of the day, and hardly ever getting an hour of an evening, to run out or to mend one's clothes. It's too much of a good thing. I shall ask for the holiday, and I'll have it, or know the reason why."

"Kitty, Kitty," said John, in a mild, reproving manner, "I never heard you speak in so unhappy a tone before. Recollect that there are other 'dining establishments' beside 'The Universal,' some of them of a much higher class, though few of, perhaps, higher character, where the waitress gets more time on her hands, and better pay into the bargain, than you appear to have. And it is very likely, if you keep your eyes open, and go on here after the old fashion, you may one day obtain such a situation."

The arrival of several customers put an end to the conversation, and John went off to his business. The Derby-day arrived, and the