

## The Editor's Wife.

The following extracts are from a poem read by Eugene Field, at the recent Banquet of the Chicago Press Club:

When the editor comes from his office at night  
At a very late hour, in a dubious plight,  
The impression prevails and the story is told  
That the editor's wife can be always cajoled  
With a fib about "bridges" and "broken-down  
presses."

But we who have been there are free to confess  
That when husbands are late and suspicious  
are rife  
It is best to own up to the editor's wife.

And of course you'll agree since our wives are  
all here  
To brighten the scene and partake of our  
cheer—  
That the best of all angels kind Heaven has  
sent  
To bring a man sympathy, peace, and content—  
To add to his joys and to lessen his woes—  
To sew on his buttons and patch up his hose—  
And to smooth out the kinks and the wrinkles  
of life.  
Is the idol we worship—the editor's wife.

You may drink to your trade and your creature  
of fame—  
I raise not my glass till I hear her sweet name;  
'Tis to her alone who uncomplainingly bears  
The all of her sorrows, the most of our cares—  
Whose wealth of sweet influence subtly in-  
spires  
Our grandest achievements and noblest de-  
sires—  
'Tis to her I would drink—our companion in  
life—  
God's best in-iration, the editor's wife!

## CUPIDITY AND CRIME.

## CHAPTER VII.—(CONTINUED.)

"We loved so truly and faithfully; why were we thus betrayed?"

But the wild question was unanswered, even in her own heart. Her eyes grow dim with anguish, not with tears; she could not see the placid splendor of the waters, the sun dipping below the horizon and throwing a last roseate glory round him as he sank to rest—could not see the slender upright figure coming with rapid steps across the red sand, with an eager reflection of that sunset glow in the dark blue eyes—saw nothing, heard nothing, until a shadow fell across her, a hand touched her shoulder, and a voice she had thought hushed forever—a man's voice, full of an exquisite tenderness and joy—fell on her ears in the low-spoken words—

"Nora, my own darling, at last, at last!"

Then she looked up, and into Arthur Beaupre's face; and then—Somehow or other the horrible present, the barrier between them, the revelations to come—all became for the moment as nothing, and drifted utterly out of her thoughts. The interview dreaded and shrunk from in anticipation as an intolerable torture changed to a sudden bliss. It was enough to look once more on the dear familiar face, to touch the hand she had thought cold in death, to know that the same earth held them still.

With a cry of utter rapture she sprang to her feet, both hands extended in eager welcome and the passionate silence of her lips most eloquently interpreted by the gladness of the dark dilating eyes.

"My true love!" Arthur Beaupre cried, as he drew her fondly to him and kissed again and again the tremulous lips. "Nora, are you so very glad? I will abuse my fate then never again. A welcome such as this is worth journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death."

For one breathless, motionless moment Nora looked into her lover's eyes, read the unchanging love in their lusc depths, and forgot how soon that happy light must fade away or change to cruel scorn. If she could only die so, the girl thought, death would be welcome indeed.

But Death was not so merciful. He was busy striking down with remorseless arrow the young and happy, those to whom life was full of promise and rarely sweet; the harassed and sorely troubled and heart-broken might call on him in vain, as Nora in her throbbing pain called now.

With a long shuddering sigh she drew herself from Arthur's close clasp, and turned her white face and wild-anguished

eyes out towards the slowly-darkening sky and sea.

The quiet resolute movement surprised and hurt him. Was this a time for prudery or reserve on the part of his promised wife—this moment in which he had come back to her, not only across a weary waste of land and sea, but almost as it were from the confines of another world?

"Nora!" he said, almost angrily; and then, as he came a pace or two nearer, and caught a side-glimpse of the beautiful face with its look of wordless woe, the anger died out of his heart, and fear, mingled with an infinite and a tender compassion, took its place. She looked like one whose reason trembled in the balance. What if the shock had been too much for her? What if she had not known?

"Nora dearest!" He touched her slender shoulder gently, and the touch sent a thrill of agony through the girl's overwrought and tortured nerves. She drew farther back still, covering her face with both small shaking hands, as though to shut out some sight of utter horror. "Nora, what is it?" he went on; and the handsome worn face, the eager eyes, and pleasant manly voice were all filled with perplexity and pain. "Surely you knew! Surely you have heard from Christine?"

"Yes, I have heard from Christine," she answered, in a strained broken tone, never turning her head or looking at her lover as she spoke.

"And you expected me?"

"I expected you," she echoed monotonously.

"Then, in Heaven's name, what does this mean?" he cried with angry energy again. "Nora, am I dreaming or mad, or are you? That my letters were unanswered was nothing—I crossed them on their outward voyage; but that such a welcome should await me here—!" He paused abruptly, his worn features contracting with a spasm of intolerable pain, then went on more firmly. "Nora, look me in the face and tell me all the truth. I can bear that, dear, whatever it may be; this cruel suspense I cannot. You thought the bond between us was wholly broken, thought me dead, and true and tender as your heart is, you might in time forget. Have you forgotten, Nora? Have you ceased to love me? If you have, say so without fear, and without one reproach I will set you free."

"Oh, no, no, no!" the girl cried, in shrill and passionate denial; had shame and death been the instant penalty of speech, she could have kept silence no longer. "Arthur, I think my heart is broken; but it has never changed to you. I loved you—love you—shall love you always till I die; but you must go. I must never see you again."

His face, which had brightened with her opening words, grew dark and troubled once again.

"You received my letters?" he asked, abruptly, speaking sternly—though in truth he was filled with pity—that he might the better check his companion's hysterical passion.

She laughed—actually laughed—a shrill mirthless peal that made Arthur Beaupre shiver.

"Yes, I received them, a little late—see!"

She held up the letters, and, as Arthur took them, he noticed, with a sudden terror, the wild unnatural glitter of the lovely eyes.

"See!" she repeated, impatiently, as he held the letters in a mechanical clasp and gazed with wistful tenderness at her.

"Look at the letters, Arthur; do you see anything strange?"

He turned them over with a deepening perplexity in his kind eyes.

"The seals are unbroken still. What does this mean?" he asked gravely, still exercising a giant self-control, though his heart throbbed wildly, and something seemed to pulsate unnaturally and confusingly within his brain.

"It means that you must tell me all that those letters hold; they never

reached me till to-day," Nora said, with a repetition of the terrible jarring laugh.

"They tell you only what you know already," the man said, with a kind of weary pain—"that I am not dead, but living; that I was wounded in the heat, and remained for eighteen months, a senseless log, devoid of memory or sensation, in a Zulu kraal, saved by a capricious accident from the fate that befell my fellow-prisoners. Like all savages, these hold the insane as sacred; and for the greater portion of my captivity I was indeed mad. Then slowly, as the wound healed, the cloud lifted from my brain, and little by little sense and memory awoke—little by little I came to be the harmless privileged plaything of the Zulu camp, contented to amuse the round-eyed dusky children, and bask with blunted senses in the sun, and became the heart-sick, miserable prisoner pining for friends and home."

"The war was over when my senses came back—so much I understood from the broken words of those around me—and my heart leaped within me with the thought that I was free. But when, with many expressions of gratitude for the care and kindness shown me, I proposed to leave the camp, I was gently reminded that I was a prisoner still."

"The terms of peace had been signed, and they had included the surrender of all living prisoners by a certain date, the chief informed me, with serene gravity and polite regret. He had retained me by the wish of his women, who thought that a madman would bring luck to the kraal. Since I was mad no longer, and useless in my other capacity, he would willingly set me free; but to do so would be to admit a disobedience to the orders of the great chief above him, who invariably punished such default with death to the sinner and demolition to his kraal. In these circumstances I would, he was sure, forgive him for keeping me prisoner still."

"I could do nothing, Nora, but chafe madly at the bonds that held me, but pray and plead and threaten alternately, and try to bribe my captors with ever-increasing promises of reward. I thought of England, of those at home, of you, Nora; and my heart burned more and more hotly within me with the wildaching longing to be free. But neither threats nor promises availed me; both were received with equal indifference; and at last I began to understand that here my fate was fixed, here in this scorching alien land, amid these squalid, savage surroundings. Far from all dear to me, and from all to whom I was dear, I must live and die."

"There came to me with that overpowering conviction, Nora, not even the sullen resignation of despair, but something of the wild impulse that leads the captive bird to flutter and beat out its little life against the cruel bars that prison it. I neither ate, nor drank, nor slept; I watched with a fierce joy my wasting limbs and daily failing strength. I even taunted my captors with the power to escape them still. I might never see the English cliffs again, my bones might whiten in the red African sand; but I should look upon that abhorrent blue sky and tread the scorched earth, red with the blood of my fellow-soldiers, but a few days more."

"They were wild reckless words; I wonder that the fierce savages to whom I spoke did not punish them with instant death. I think I wished them to shorten my agony; but the wish was vain. They listened in silence; and I dragged my aching limbs away to my accustomed corner, to wait in a sullen patience for the lagging freedom that must surely come again."

"And it came at last, though not in the shape that I expected. The chief himself visited me soon after that, and told me, with evident reluctance, as though the confession were wrung from him by outside influence, that on certain conditions he would set me free."

"My strength and courage revived miraculously with that word. What conditions, consistent with honor, could he impose that I would not accept? And his were simple enough. He only asked that I would travel incognito to England, and, shielding him as much as possible from the imperial wrath, which was but a secondary consideration, save him at all costs from the ruinous vengeance of his immediate chief."

"Of course I promised; and to the best of my ability I have kept my word. Only to you did I write the story of my captivity and release, and you I bound to silence until I should reach England. I might have left that wish unspoken," he added bitterly, with a glance at the unbroken seals. "I did not guess that you would not even read my letters."

Nora had listened with parted lips and eager shining eyes, with a wrapped attention that drew him on in spite of himself, with an absorbed interest that deadened her cruel pain; but the last words brought her back sharply to the keen anguish of the present. She covered her eyes and uttered a low cry of pain.

"Nora," he said gently, yet with a passionate eagerness that thrilled and mastered her, "let there be no more mystery between us. You say you love me still."

"With my whole heart," she answered recklessly.

"Then why do you receive me thus? Why did you not read my letters?"

The cruel moment was come at last; the question she could neither fence with nor elude was put. A great flood of color flashed across the ivory pallor of her face, her eyes glittered with an unnatural lustre, her hands were clenched till the nails pierced the soft palms, and her breath came in pitiable gasps.

"Why?" she echoed; and there was the wail of a lost spirit in the word. "Because Christine Singleton has been a she-Judas to you, Arthur, and to me. She kept your letters back when—when they might still have saved me, and sent them to me to-day."

Arthur Beaupre listened, with a look that changed rapidly from bewildered surprise to fiercest indignation. His blue eyes flashed dangerously, and the delicate-cut lips beneath the fair soft mustache, hardened and set as though chiselled in marble.

"She— But we will not speak of her now," he said, interrupting himself quickly. "You say the letters came to you to-day. Was your patience worn out that you have no welcome for me now?"

She looked him straight in the eyes for a moment's space, mutely begging him to read in that ferocious anguished glance the story she found it so cruelly hard to put into words. But he held no clue to the mystery as yet, had no suspicion of the crushing blow to come. She saw this, and turned away her head with a wailing, pitiful cry.

"He does not guess, he will not help me! Oh, Arthur, do you not see that it was the very crown of Christine's revenge to let me know you lived, to send you here to me to-day?"

"To-day?" he repeated blankly, yet with a dawning horror in his eyes. Then he added, with sudden sternness and a look at the costly velvet dress, so unlike Nora Bruce's ordinary every-day attire, "Why was it specially cruel to-day? Nora—as the girl's parched lips moved in a dreadful soundless effort to explain—"What brings you away from home, and here?"

Then she turned, and answered with a sudden desperate effort—

"Oh, Arthur, forgive—it is my wedding-day."

A dead, dreadful silence, broken only by the soft wash of the waves and the faint whisper of the wind among the trees, followed the unexpected words. The blow had fallen, and with crushing force, upon the man whose heart had beaten high with love and hope an hour before.