

HOME AT LAST.

Mr. R. S. Chilton, United States Consul at Goderich, Ont., who wrote the original inscription for the monument placed on the grave of John Howard Payne, at Tunis, read the following beautiful lines at the final interment of the author of "Home, Sweet Home," at Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, recently:

The exile hath returned, and now at last
In kindred earth his ashes shall repose.
Fit recompense for all his weary past
That here the scene should close—the drama close.

Here, where his own loved skies o'erarch the spot:
And where familiar trees their branches wave;
Where the dear home-born flowers he ne'er forgot
Shall bloom, and shed their dews upon his grave.

Will not the wood-thrush, pausing in her flight,
Carol more sweetly o'er this place of rest?
Here linger longest in the fading light,
Before she seeks her solitary nest?

Not his lofty lyre, but one whose strings
Were gently touched to soothe our human kind—
Like the mysterious harp that softly sings,
Swept by the unseen fingers of the wind.

The home-sick wanderer in a distant land,
Listening his soul hath known a double bliss:
Felt the warm pressure of a father's hand,
And, seal of seals! a mother's sacred kiss.

In humble cottage, as in hall of state,
His transient fancy never ceased to roam,
O'er backward years, and—irony of fate!—
Of home he sang who never found a home!

Not even in death, poor wanderer, till now:
For long his ashes slept in alien soil.
Will they not thrill to-day, as round his brow
A fitting wreath is twined with loving toil?

Honor and praise be his whose generous hand
Brought the sad exile back, no more to roam:
Back to the bosom of his own loved land—
Back to his kindred friends, his own "Sweet Home!"

A TRAGEDY IN A PRIVATE LIFE.

BY NED P. MAH.

I.

If the old adage, "Happy is the bride the sun shines on" were a sure axiom, then Hetty Meredith's married life was destined to be happy one: for no brighter day, no more brilliant sunshine, no balmy zephyrs had ever been, then shed lustre on, and refreshed, and tinged with a brighter flush the delicately tinted cheeks of bride and bridesmaids on Hetty Meredith's wedding day.

Yet the unsubstantial promise of the sunshine was not the only voucher for the future. The watch, the village gossip said, was a true love match. A handsomer couple had never—so all eye witnesses averred—crossed the threshold, or passed the porch, of the quaint little church at Hamblemeer. With health and beauty, with hope, and pluck, and the strength of unity, with youth and good prospects, with the love, and esteem, and good wishes of all who knew them, what might not this young couple accomplish. There was not a cloud, no, not so large as a man's hand, upon the horizon of their new life.

So said, in other words, the village gossips. So thought, each after his fashion, but still arriving at the same idea, the venerable greybeards who doffed their hats with muttered blessings: so thought the envious maidens who gazed, with a jealous awe, upon the bride: so thought the young men who wished they stood in the bridegroom's shoes that day, that his chances were theirs, always provided, however, that their especial brides elect wore the satin slippers of the bride: so thought too, the happy wives and husbands, who realised how much happier still their lives might be if they might change their toilsome lot for the smooth path of those they gazed upon: so thought, even, the wives and husbands who were not happy, for, if they had not drawn prizes in the lottery that was no reason why others should draw blanks.

Even the children looked on with wondering envy. "When we are big enough we will be married too," said they.

It is a merciful thing that we cannot, as we all have, doubtless, sometime longed to do, withdraw the curtain from the future. It was an especially merciful thing that Hetty could not, on that day, lift the veil that shadowed with mystery the coming years. Could she have done so, could she have known how false the omen of the sunshine, how illusive her hopes, how unworthy of her trust the man to whom she clung with all the confidence of a bright innocent nature: she would have lost twelve whole months of happiness—the one sweet oasis in the desert of her life which was all she would have to repay her for the lonely years of her childhood—for the more terrible misery of after years.

If you please, reader, we will not anticipate either. Let us, in imagination, enjoy the exhilarating sunshine, let us join in the universal gaiety, let us giggle with the bridesmaids, laugh with the guests, sympathize with the radiant happiness of the bride, share the pride which the bridegroom, in a moving speech, declared he felt at possessing such grace, and beauty, and worth; let us participate in the merry jests, the tempting delicacies, the foaming champagne of the wedding breakfast; and let us even, in wilful ignorance of the terrible future, fling the

traditional old shoe after the carriage of the departing pair, as they start for Germany, and wish them luck.

II.

It is a pretty fable that teaches that every one of us is attended by his good and bad angel, by a guardian spirit and a demon, who are for ever at war. When we do right our good angel conquers; when we sin, the bad spirit has won the day, and asserts, in triumph, his baneful influence.

Sometimes incidents in real life bring this fable vividly home to us.

Hetty, Harry Burton told himself, was his guardian angel. Cora Rosenkranz he felt to be his evil genius.

The two women were as different in their external types as in their inward natures. Hetty was bright, golden haired, blue eyed, simple in her tastes: innocent, pure, confiding: so slight, so unearthly, so ethereal, that had she suddenly been discovered to possess a pair of snowy pinions, I doubt if the world would have marvelled greatly. Cora's beauty, on the other hand, was intensely of the earth, earthly. It was terrible in its power, fascinating, irresistible. She was a large, pale woman, with a complexion like marble, with eyes like basilisks, and a form like the work of a classic sculptor. Her hair, which whirled and twisted in great, glistening, serpent like tresses, was intensely—as everything about this woman was intense—dark as with the blackness of night. Those who loved her were never made happy by her love: there was something so enslaving in the passion she aroused, that they trembled even as they worshipped. Her costume was costly even to extravagance: her jewels, heavy, large, and dazzling. Her manner commanding and full of queenly grace—her language wit, satire, cynicism.

When Hetty and Cora Rosenkranz first met, Hetty felt an instinctive antipathy to this woman: but it was only the instinctive antipathy of an uncongenial nature; she did not then dread her as a rival. I suppose that, having implicit trust in her husband, and judging his nature by her own, nay, having always looked up to him as possessing a nobler nature than she possessed, in which her weak virtues were strengthened by a masculine strength, she may have thought that he would have felt a repugnance much greater than her own. Besides, Cora was a married woman, and the idea that a married woman could seek to captivate any one but her husband, never entered the innocent child's head; for Hetty was but an innocent child, she had not yet reached her twentieth year, and had been Harry's bride barely six months.

It was not until months afterwards, until after a little one had been born to them, which, had it lived, might possibly have arrived to divert her thoughts from her terrible agony and have averted, or at least have alleviated the horrible doom which awaited her, that she became sensible that her husband's manner was changed towards her: that his smile was less bright, his gaze less fond. And the poor child thought that the fault must be her own, and vexed herself to find out wherein she could have offended: and, recognising no change, her life became a burden and a misery.

"Cora," said Harry Burton, as the pair wandered through the grounds of the ancient schloss by the river's side, where the light fell chequered across their path through the foliage of the grand old trees: while the white swans crowded to the rush fringed edge of the stream, expectant of a bountiful shower of dainty crumbs of wheat bread, which they were not, however, destined to receive, for kindness to dumb creatures was not one of the weaknesses of Cora's nature. "Cora, you and Hetty between you are making my life a misery to me."

"Pray," returned the enchantress, with a flash of her great eyes, "which is it, for Hetty, that makes you miserable? I was not aware," she continued with a passionate glance, "that my companionship was so unattractive as to afflict people with ennui."

"I am not tired of your society," he said, nor are your charms one whit less powerful in their magnetism. But my wife is wasting away before my eyes, and you are responsible for the neglect that is killing her."

"Of course," she cried, "throw all the blame on my shoulders. What a baby this wife of yours must be. Does she expect you to be tied to her apron strings every moment of the day?"

"You must remember," he said, "that she is little more than a child, and as ignorant of the world as if she were a child indeed. I cannot live here and see her miserable. I cannot live this acted lie from day to day. I cannot call up the old bright smile to my false lips. I cannot school my false tongue to utter the old affectionate words. And the poor child wonders at my coldness, at my preoccupation, and vexes herself to discover some fault in her own conduct, to win me back with a more complete devotion. Oh, it is pitiful to see her hide her misery under a false and ghastly gaiety. In a word it is more than I can bear. Cora, will you fly with me? You have told me a thousand times how distasteful to you is your home where you are doomed to the importunities of a grey bearded bookworm whom you cannot love. Let us seek some other land, where, far from all who know us, we may find a peaceful refuge: where—"

"Pshaw!" she cried, "you are talking nonsense, child. Why should we create a scandal? We are happy here. I have a rich husband who loads me with jewels and is too blind to notice my little amusements. Why should I leave a comfortable home to share with you a hut and your heart?" she laughed. "Such romantic folly is very pretty in story books, it will not wash in real life. Why should we make fools of ourselves, and blazon our folly to the world?"

"For my sake, for my wife's sake—" he began.

Cora smiled a cruel smile.

"Faugh!" she thought, "what is she to me? The baby faced, thin blooded doll. What can men see in these milk and watery women?" But she only said, "I think you men are all like great children. Have you no patience, no tact? Is not my love worth some small sacrifice to you? If you love me as I deserve to be loved your wife can be nothing to you: but for form's sake you should bear with her, humor her, let her perceive no difference in you. Surely you have sufficient talent for that, clumsy one!"

They had wandered from the public path lest some chance passenger might recognize them. They stood beneath the arching boughs as Adam might have stood with Eve in Paradise, alone with Nature. But how freely had these two eaten of the tree of Knowledge!

There was a rustle in the bushes. "Hist! did you hear that," cried Burton. "We are watched."

"Nonsense! It was a bird that sought its nest: a snake moving in the withered grass. O you timid boy!" she cried, taking his head between her two hands, looking into his eyes from the dark, passionate dreamy depths of hers, drawing down his lips to hers, and kissing him as no other woman had ever yet kissed him, and as she as yet had kissed no other man. "Cannot even such a love as mine raise you above these weak fears?"

III.

It is proverbial that the last ears which scandal reaches, are the ears of those whom it concerns. But it does reach even theirs sometimes.

That day Kammerherr Rosenkranz called his young wife to his study, and put into her hands an anonymous letter.

"Read that," he said, "I need not tell you that I do not believe one word of it, and that, if I discover the author, he shall not go unpunished."

Cora's lip curled. "Believe it!" she cried. "I do not fear that it should gain credence. All who know the discrimination of my own dear Kammerherr must be assured that he would not marry a wife on whose virtue he could not rely!"

"My heart!" said the grey haired child, glaring benignly on his beautiful wife through his glasses, "I do rely upon her virtue, most implicitly."

She rewarded him with a kiss upon his wrinkled forehead, and left the room—raging.

"Harry is right," she muttered, "To stay here may subject us to endless annoyances. Perhaps, poverty and peace may be best after all. At any rate it is worth trying." And she sought an interview with her lover.

"Harry," she said, "I have changed my mind. I am a convert to your view of the question. I meekly submit, in deference to your better judgement, to share a hut and your heart. There is but one bar," she sneered, "where are the funds?"

"Never fear," he said, "but I will find them. Are you sincere in your decision, will you be true to the bargain?"

"As true as steel," she said.

IV.

Oberkassierer Lindorff was the son of a German father and an English mother, and owed his position to the influence of his maternal uncle who was engineer-in-chief of an English company engaged in building a system of railways for the German government. Harry Burton was his assistant and secretary.

Oberkassierer Lindorff said that "building railways broadened a man's ideas—he got used to doing things on a large scale." And as if in the endeavor to illustrate this truth, he certainly did everything on as large a scale as possible. Physically, he was on a large scale himself, a corpulent giant. His clothes were made on a large scale and hung loosely on his broad dignified frame. "It is remarkable," said his tailor, "what a monstrous quantity of cloth it takes to make a suit for the Herr Oberkassierer." He drank wine on a large scale, he ate on a large scale, he smoked on a large scale, and, emphatically, he swore on a large scale.

Oberkassierer Lindorff sat in his arm chair, (which was of necessity on a large scale to admit him), opening his morning correspondence. Traders' accounts, invoices, bills of lading, tenders for the supply of material, applications for situations, soon scattered his desk in most approved confusion.

"Ah, here," cried the Oberkassierer at length—he prided himself on his imitation of the English manner and the facility with which he adopted the English idiom—"is what immediately must be seen to. Burton, my jolly good-fellow, you will take, when you will be so good, ten thousand thalers from silver, and five thousand from bank notes, and drive with them in a *Droschke* to the post office, and to send them the cashier at Kleinstadt, back-bringing me one receipt."

"Would it not be better, sir," suggested Harry, "to send the larger amount in bank notes, reserving our silver for the more remote districts, where change is less easily procurable?"

"You have right, believe Burton, you have right!" exclaimed the chief cashier. "You will take, then, from the bank note, ten thousand, and from the silver, five: and you will write for me one letter to that purpose, which I shall sign."

Burton seized a quill, and wrote—

"Mr. Smith,

"Kleinstadt,

"Dear Sir,—Herewith please find,

Bills, 10,000 thrs.

Silver, 5,000

15,000 thalers.

"Your receipt for which on account of works will oblige."

He then handed the concise epistle to Lindorff, who scrawled, on as large a scale as the space allowed him permitted—for Harry, in deference to the German proclivity for titles, had duly circumscribed the space by the addition of his official rank—his signature, Alfred Lindorff, at the foot of the page, and the document was complete.

Then Harry, calling the messenger, sent for a cab, in which five bags, each containing one thousand thalers, were duly deposited. The ten thousand in bills, together with the letter, being entrusted to the safe keeping of a huge official envelope, and thrust into the depths of Harry's breast pocket.

Slam went the door of the vehicle, crack went the whip, and Burton was whirled rapidly to the post office, which was in the same building as the railway terminus.

A tremendous increase of pace, resulting in so sudden a pull up that Harry grazed his nose against the frame of the front windows, and a crack of the whip that resembled the report of a pistol, announced his arrival at the office of the Royal-Imperial post.

The driver opened the door with a flourish, and Burton, leaping out, presented his pale, melancholy, anxious, yet withal handsome face, and a highly flavored *La Patria* at the small, square office, which the raising of a glass allowed for the transaction of business with the blue uniformed officials within.

"Ah! good morning, Max," he cried, recognising the companion of a recent evening at *bassette*. "I have not a very large consignment," he continued, in reference to the heavy bags the cabman was busily depositing in the sacred precincts, "to entrust to you to-day. Only five thousand to enable Smith to hold on till we can send him more."

And as Max turned to the right about to verify the amount by the bags, Burton's lean hand stole out of the folds of his liveries cape, and clutching between two white and taper fingers a couple of the printed receipt-forms which depended from a string incautiously near the little confession-like window, hastily resumed its place beneath the heavy folds of the cloak.

Having duly counted the five bags, and noted that the labels intimated their contents to be one thousand thalers each, Max turned again towards his visitor, detached from its fyle and made out the usual receipt, and handing the same to Burton, parted with him with a joke on the good fortune of their last attempt to win the smiles of the fickle goddess.

Then Burton, saying to the man who stood at the door of the *Droschke* respectfully awaiting his orders, "Drive me back to the office. Your horse looks a little blown from coming up the hill; you needn't hurry," resumed his seat in the vehicle.

As the driver turned into a narrow by street used by few passengers, and on one side of which was a high dead wall, Burton drew forth the black receipt forms which he had stolen, took from his pocket a small travelling inkstand, and pressing the slide which produced a pen from his silver pencil case, traced carefully, by placing the blank over the receipt which had been filled up by Max, upon the window of the cab, the signature of the post clerk.

He had arrived successfully at the penultimate letter, when a severe jolt, caused by a hiatus in the paving stones, made the clever forgery terminate in a series of illegible hieroglyphics.

"Curse the luck!" cried Burton, but he had no cause to repeat the expletive, for a heavy wagon standing at the door of a warehouse blocked the way, and, during the stoppage necessary for its removal, he had sufficient time to make a clever copy of Max. Bjovnsen's autograph upon the second blank with which he had fortunately provided himself.

The figures were of less moment. He could imitate them easily, with sufficient accuracy to defy detection.

Chuckling to himself he closed his inkstand and pencil-case, and laid the receipt upon the opposite seat to dry.

In high spirits he rewarded the Jehu with a liberality that astonished that phlegmatic personage, entered the office whistling, deposited the two receipts upon the fyle upon the chief cashier's desk, and, resuming his own seat, proceeded as coolly with the day's routine, as though no ten thousand thalers of stolen money lurked in the breast pocket of his eminently respectable broadcloth coat.

Towards evening, however, he complained of feeling unwell, and his last words to Lindorff were:—