

against the actual thief, whose silence was secured by the unmolested enjoyment of his booty.

The whole affair was hushed up, or rather extinguished, by an ovation to Cicely, in which her aunt announced her as her adopted daughter and heir.

Charles Leland and she were quietly married somewhat later. In their happiness and affluence Cicely still sometimes repeats that "love is enough."

THE BROOK'S STORY.

I'll tell you what the brook did say.
To me one lovely summer day,
As flowing on across the lea
It reached and softly kissed the sea.

Above, the birds their sweet songs sang,
The wood with many a chorus rang,
The softest winds breathed through the tree,
All nature seemed in harmony.

And thus the brook: "Tis many a year
Since two did often ramble here,
And sit them down to watch me play
And hear me laugh the hours away.

"One was a maiden good and fair,
Beauty had given her graces rare,
While in her ever kindly eye,
The light of love beamed constantly.

"The other was a youth who talked,
As 'long the leaf-crowned path they walked
Of days of happiness to come
In some far-off, some new-found home.

"For years the twain I did not see,
I thought they had forgotten me;
When one rare day in early June,
When nature's heart was all attune,

"They came, and 'neath the same old tree
Sat down and held commune with me.
Her hair was gray, but still the light
Of love beamed in her eye most bright.

"His form was bent with labors done,
Still on his face a sweet smile shone;
And then I knew time had not chilled.
Their hearts with love and goodness filled.

"They talked of days when they were young,
Of birds that with me oft had sung,
Of youth's strange dreams that used to shine
With light that seemed almost divine.

"They came as pilgrims to a shrine
And once more blent their words with mine;
It was to them a sacred place,
Towards which their steps they must re-
trace."

Such was the tale the brook did tell,
A story old, and known full well,
For age can never make depart
Youth's recollections from the heart.

PRETTY MAY.

She had been the belle of Wildhaven since she came from a boarding-school to preside over her father's house, with pretty airs of control, which Mrs. Wells, the actual house-keeper, never resented or contradicted.

Her beauty was of an exquisitely delicate type.

Her hair, of golden brown, covered her tall, slender figure like a veil in fine threads of richest gold.

Her eyes were a deep hazel, shaded by long golden brown lashes, and her features were cut as clearly and regularly as a fine cameo.

Hands and feet were small and slender, and her whole figure was gracefully rounded.

But her greatest perfection was a skin as fair, soft, and spotless as that of a miniature painting.

Mary Jane Trask was her proper cognomen.

But she was May from a baby; May in school, and when at eighteen she came home for good, there were probably not six people in Wildhaven who knew her name was actually Mary Jane.

She reigned by right of her lovely face, her kind heart, her accomplishments, and her father's position, for old Dr. Trask was one of the grandees of the place.

Nobody wondered when Mr. Pendleton, the great artist, came to Wildhaven for the summer, that he requested the doctor to allow him to take Miss May's portrait; he set up a great easel and canvas, by May's permission, in a large empty room at the doctor's, and began his painting in good earnest.

He had brought letters to Dr. Trask from some old friends.

When May stood for her picture in the great empty room, nobody's hands were raised in horror because no matron sat beside her.

Her dress for these occasions was of thin, floating muslin, cut to show her round shoulders and arms, and her waving golden hair fell unbound around her.

Upon the dress and in the hair were scattered delicate spring blossoms, and the small hands carried long sprays of tender green leaves.

But once dressed and in position, Mark Pendleton desired his fair model to forget that she was sitting for a picture and exerted every charm of his wonderful powers of conversation for that purpose.

And May listened and answered, modestly and intelligently, till she would grow interested in her subjects, when her large eyes would dilate with feeling, her cheeks flush to delicate rose tints, and her face intensify its own beauty,

till the artist sighed to think how poorly paint and pencil could reproduce the exquisite face he copied.

When the sittings were over and May was in her everyday dresses of dainty muslins, with her superb hair neatly coiled round her shapely little head, Mr. Pendleton could often be persuaded to stay to dinner, and then there would follow long walks in shady lanes.

He was somewhat older than May, this artist, who had seen, had read, and thought so much, and whose pictures commanded such high prices.

But his heart was fresh and youthful as a boy's, and his love of beauty an undying source of delight to him.

He had a tall figure and fine face, with large, dark, soul-lit eyes, and May thought him as handsome as he thought her, which is saying a great deal.

So they gave heart for heart in the long summer days, as they interchanged the deep soul-talk that draws true love in the strongest bonds.

The wordly-wise man, the artist whose name was a well-known one, gave his heart to the gentle, sweet girl, who thought Heaven was opened for her as she knew the gift was hers.

Dr. Trask gave his consent, sighing a little at the prospect of losing his child.

The wedding-day was fixed for October, and Mark Pendleton returned to prepare a home for his bride.

It was August when he left Wildhaven, and May had piles of sewing to accomplish, but her lover's parting words were—

"Don't work too hard, my darling. I want my little wife's face as fair as spring itself when I come to claim her."

Before he had been gone two weeks Wildhaven was thrown into terror-stricken suffering by the breaking out of a contagious fever, that spread with lightning rapidity.

It was so violent, so fatal, that everyone who was spared actual sickness was busy in the care of friend or relative.

May forgot her dainty stitching and ruffling, her coming wedding, and even her happiness, in the suffering around her.

In the fearful scorching heat she worked over a hot stove, preparing delicacies for the sick, and carried them herself to the sufferers, the scorching sun beating down upon her with dry, burning heat.

Often she found the nurse of yesterday the invalid of to-day, and would remain night after night tending the worst cases under her father's care, more than once ending her duty by dressing the still form of a dearly-loved friend for the grave.

Her father guarded her by preventives and precautions as far as possible, but he never stopped her.

"She is doing the work of her Heavenly Father! He will protect her," was his answer to some few friendly remonstrances, and for a long time it seemed as if the maiden bore indeed a charmed life.

The fever had run its course when in September a cool week broke the oppressive heat, and no new cases occurred afterwards except one.

But, ah, that one tore the doctor's heart-strings more than all the rest, for in her own room, tossing in delirious agony, May called piteously for the father she did not recognise, the lover absent from her, the friends gone from earth for ever.

Over and over again she lived the painful scenes of the past few weeks, and Mrs. Wells, her faithful nurse, knew she stood very near the grave for many long days.

May did not know when Mark Pendleton was sent for, and admitted to the darkened room, for what they feared was a last gaze at his promised wife; she did not know when all the glorious profusion of her golden hair was shorn off; she knew nothing for many, many days, till waking from a long, deep sleep, she saw with clear, comprehending eyes her father's face bending over her.

She smiled, wondering where her voice had gone as she said faintly—

"Father!"

And he, softly kissing her eyelids, as they closed again, only murmured—

"Thank God! my child is spared to me."

There was a long convalescence, and after May could sit up and be dressed, she wondered where her mirror and hand-glass had vanished.

Mrs. Wells muttered something about—

"Eliza's so careless, always breaking something," and her father called her "little vanity," with a quavering smile, when she asked for them.

Even when Mark came, as he did several times, Mrs. Wells dressed her, and tied on the lace cap that covered her poor bald head.

But one day, when she felt nearly well, she stole down into the sitting-room alone, and looked full in the mirror over the mantel-piece.

She knew then why she had been so tenderly guarded from the shock of seeing her own face. A border of fluted lace replaced her splendid hair, and a uniform deep pink color was spread like a mask over her whole face.

Her eyes were sunken, and a strange, unnatural ugliness seemed to have entirely usurped her own beauty.

Covering her face, she wept bitter, unavailing tears.

She had been innocently proud of her lovely face, and Mark had loved it.

Even in her first grief the thought most of her lover, sobbing his name till, as if in answer, he bent over her.

"May," he said, "do not grieve so. It is only your beauty that is gone. The best of you is here, little May."

She looked up, saying—

"You had better call me Mary Jane now. It suits my face better."

"I want to call you Mrs. Pendleton as soon as possible," he replied gaily.

"Mark! You would not marry such a fright."

"Just try me! Why May," he added, gravely, "you surely do not imagine this change in your face shakes my love. Suppose this fever had come after we were married, do you suppose I should have run away?"

"You would have been forced to submit, then, I suppose," she said, very dolefully. "Now you can escape."

"Thanks! I am very content in my present bondage, I assure you."

And he proved the fact by urging an early wedding.

The doctor smiled when May made some wondering comments, saying—

"I should be sorry to think Mark loved only your beauty, my daughter."

And the old man indulged in a most unusual chuckle, as if immensely amused by some thought of his own.

But the wedding was once more postponed by Mark himself.

His brother in Canada died suddenly, and the widow needed someone to look after the property.

So the winter glided away, and April opened, when a telegram announced Mark's speedy return, and preparations for the wedding were hastened in earnest.

The doctor met Mr. Pendleton at the station, and drove him to the house, assuring him that the day they had previously selected for the marriage, the fifteenth, would now meet his engagements exactly.

"But that is this morning?"

"Exactly! I will postpone it if you wish."

"No, indeed! But you must give me a chance to dress."

"You have an hour! It is now ten. My friends will assemble at the church at eleven. You are my guest."

May was invisible while Mark was escorted to the spare room, where his trunk stood open, and every comfort was ready for his toilet.

But a tall, slender, white-robed figure, with a long lace veil, waited, leaning upon Dr. Trask's arm, when the bridegroom was ready, and slowly advanced up the aisle.

The solemn words were spoken that made May his own for life, and then the bridesmaids gently lifted the veil, and Mark saw his wife.

His May, fairer than ever, stood before him, her delicate beauty perfectly restored.

Upon her head, in place of the heavy braids and coils of hair were tiny clustering ringlets of gold like a baby's; the pink mask was gone, and the soft complexion was delicately fair and pure.

Mark clasped her passionately to his heart in joy.

It was a long time afterwards that Dr. Trask told his son-in-law—

"Of course I knew the disfigurement was only temporary, but I thought it was a good test of your affection."

And that affection, so true, so noble, is as fresh in Mark's heart now as when he first loved Pretty May.

TOO LATE.

BY A. S.

If you had mentioned Martin Wilbur to any of the villagers in the limits of Pond Hill you would have been informed that he was the richest man in the county, and a crusty old bachelor, past fifty. Had your informant been very communicative, he would further have told you that Mr. Wilbur lived on his own fine estate on the Hill, with his widowed sister for his only companion.

Opinions were divided with regard to the sister who rejoiced in the high-sounding name of Mrs. Harrison Curtis, and was ten years her brother's senior. The wealthy portion of Pond Hill were unanimous in pronouncing Mrs. Curtis a handsome, amiable old lady, who dispensed the hospitalities of her brother's handsome mansion with aristocratic grace.

The poorer class would have told you that the lady in question was condescending in a grandly patronizing manner highly exasperating to a free people, "as good as she, with all her airs, and nowadays beholden to her." The very poor, working people agreed that "Mrs. Curtis was a hard one, and not easy to work for."

Her servants hated her, and served her well from fear of dismissal from a comfortable home. Her brother gave her a support, made her mistress of his house, and saw her face as seldom as possible.

This was the lady, who, on a lovely June day, when all nature smiled, lay upon her bed, sick unto death. The best advice had been called in, a celebrated physician having come all the way from London to feel the patient's pulse, and confirm the fiat of the village doctor. Every thing that skill, attention and money could do to drive back the grim destroyer had been done, but Mary Curtis, looking upon the June sunshine, knew that she should never waken to see it again in this life. Lying propped up by the wide pillows of her handsome bed, with costly lace around her throat and wrists, and bordering her fine muslin cap, the

face looked drawn and old, though the large blue eyes were proud and cold, as if even death could not conquer the iron spirit of the invalid. A young girl, with a pleasant face, was dusting the furniture, and moving softly about the room, when Mrs. Curtis spoke.

"Katie, tell Mr. Wilbur I wish to speak to him. You need not come in again yourself until I ring."

The girl left the room, with noiseless step, and in another moment, a tall man with snow-white hair, and large clear blue eyes, entered the room. Even the contrast of his vigorous health with the wasted face of the invalid, could not destroy the strong resemblance between them.

"I hope you are feeling better, Mary," he said, kindly, as he took the thin hand extended to him.

"I shall never be better, Martin, but I have no more pain. The cessation of suffering is my death-warrant. I have sent for you, Martin, because to-morrow will be too late to tell you what has lain heavy on my heart for twenty years. I have done you a grievous wrong, Martin, and all I hoped to gain by it I have lost."

"Done me a wrong, Mary?"

"Yes, for it was my act that parted you and Caroline Masters!"

"Martin Wilbur looked earnestly at his sister.

"I am an old man, Mary," he said gently, "a hard old man, many will tell you, but that name moves me as no other name in the world has power to do. Yet I cannot tell how you parted us. Caroline Masters was false to me."

"Never! She never wronged you by word or look."

"You do not know the story, Mary. I will tell you why Caroline Masters drove me from home for five long years, why I have not looked upon her face, the face of the only woman I have ever loved, for twenty years; I met her at your own home, so you know as well as myself how graceful and winning she was, though she had no positive beauty. I loved her, and asked her to be my wife. She seemed to return my love. I was a rich man!" said Martin Wilbur, bitterly, "Caroline Masters was a poor girl, nursery governess to your children. For nearly two months I was supremely happy in the belief that I was beloved, where I loved. Then Carrie grew absent, cold, restless, seeming to have some trouble she was anxious to conceal, yet longing to tell me. I was preparing a home for my bride, repairing and modernizing this house, furnishing it to suit a fair young wife, laying out the grounds and beautifying it in every way in my power. This work called me from town frequently, and I did not see Carrie very often. One day while I was here, I found in the post-office a note in a disguised hand, telling me my promised wife was secretly meeting another man during my absence; that the change in her was due to the fact that she had ceased to love me; and the proof of the truth of the writer's statements was offered me. If I would return unexpectedly on the night of the twelfth of the current month I would find my rival with Caroline. There was a ball, to which my sister was going on that night, and believing me away, and herself free, Caroline had appointed a meeting with the man who had taken my place in her heart. Half mad with jealousy (I was twenty years younger then) I hurried at once to your house, entered with my night key, and stood a moment in the entry. From the parlor came the sound of voices, Caroline's, and that of a man.

"We cannot meet after you are married," the man said in a tender voice, "and your wedding-day is very near."

"Then, with a sob, I heard Caroline say:

"Oh, Willie! Willie! I must see you, I cannot give you up."

"I heard no more. I could not bear my own thoughts, for they were those of a murderer. Had I remained a moment longer I would have taken my rival's life. I left the house and went to a hotel; from there I wrote to Caroline one line:

"I know your secret. Farewell.—Martin."

"By the next steamer I left England. Five years later, hearing you were a widow and poor, I returned to offer a home to you and your little ones. I have never seen Caroline Masters, nor heard her name, since my own ears proved her false."

"Yet she was true to you. Before I tell you all, Martin, promise me forgiveness. I am dying!"

"Whatever you may tell me is forgiven, Mary," was the solemn reply.

"It was your wealth that tempted me, Martin. When you returned from abroad a rich man I determined, if possible, to keep you single, that I might have your wealth for my children. I knew my husband saved nothing of his large salary, and that he was consumptive. I dreaded poverty for myself and my five little ones. Wishing to keep you a bachelor, I was anxious and angry when I saw that Caroline Masters, poor, without beauty or talent, had won your affections. I had selected a plain-faced girl for the children, had kept her away from you, as far as possible, and yet you loved her. The very love for the children, upon which I built my hope of their inheriting your fortune, had drawn you to the nursery, where Caroline presided over their lessons. I know you well enough to feel sure, that if you once believed Caroline to be false, no other woman would ever take her place in your heart. The wedding-day was drawing very near, you were happy and busy in preparing a home for your bride, and I saw no opportunity to separate you and your promised wife. But the opportunity came at last. Going