

A TOWN GARDEN.

A plot of ground—the merest scrap—
Deep, like a dry, forgotten well.
A garden caught in a brick-built trap,
Where men make money, buy and sell;
And struggling through the stagnant haze
Dim flowers, with sapless leaf and stem,
Look up with something of the gaze
That homesick eyes have cast on them.

There is a rose against the wall,
With scanty, smoke-incrusted leaves;
Fair showers on happier roses fall—
On this, foul droppings from the eaves.
It pines, but you need hardly note;
It dies by inches in the gloom;
Shoots in the spring-time, as if by rote;
Long has forgotten to dream of bloom.

The poorest blossom, and it were classed
With color and name—but never a flower!
It blooms with the roses whose bloom is past,
Of every hue, and place, and hour.
They live before me as I look—
The damask buds that breathe and glow,
Pink wild roses, down by a brook,
Lavish clusters of airy snow.

Could one transplant you—far on high
A murky sunset lights the tiles—
And set you 'neath the arching sky,
In the green country, many miles,
Would you strike deep and suck up strength,
Washed with rain and hung with pearls,
Cling to the trellis, a leafy length,
Sweet with blossom for June and girls?

Yet no! Who needs you in those bowers?
Who prizes gifts that all can give?
Bestow your life instead of flowers,
And slowly die that dreams may live.
Prisoned and perishing, your dole
Of lingering leaves shall not be vain—
Worthy to wreath the hemlock bowl,
Or twice about the cross of pain!

—MARGARET VEELEY.

LIZZIE'S VOW.

A NOVELETTE OF NEW YORK.

BY ROSENTHAL BONIN.

Miss Castor had been for several years the reigning beauty of New York, not only by virtue of her personal appearance, though her tall, well-rounded figure, proud dark eyes, white brow, soft dark hair and scarlet lips gave her a right to the distinction—but principally on account of her cold, unapproachable bearing and the haughty, repellent manner which she displayed toward gentlemen.

While Lizzie Castor was really gentle and kind-hearted, nay, amiability itself to ladies, she had nothing but sarcastic smiles and cold, curt, scornful words for men, especially the younger ones, who loaded her with attentions. She scarcely permitted her most ardent admirers to touch the tips of her fingers, and yet among them were many earnest suitors, rich, handsome and clever, whom any other girl would have accepted with pleasure as "an excellent match"—and Lizzie Castor was already twenty-three years old.

True, Miss Castor had reason to be proud. Her father was a millionaire and one of the most prominent politicians in the city; his house was magnificent, and as a manufacturer he directed several thousand laborers and clerks of all grades. Lizzie herself had received an admirable education, spoke four languages, and was accomplished in almost every art; for nature had endowed her with mental gifts as remarkable as her physical ones. Yet these things alone—as was correctly said—could not be the cause of her repellent coldness to the whole masculine sex; it was too contradictory to all the other traits of the young lady's character. It was therefore inferred that Lizzie cherished in the depths of her proud heart an unhappy love; that the one person for whom she cared did not return her affection, and her heart therefore remained dead to every one else. Rumors connected her name with that of John Dobson, an eccentric man, who had formerly been a frequent guest at the Castor mansion, yet the gossips could never feel perfectly sure that he had actually belonged to the number of Miss Castor's admirers. Dobson had acquired great wealth by speculating in silver mines, had the reputation of being a wonderfully successful business man, was calmness itself, said little and acted prudently and firmly. Success followed in his footsteps, and whatever he undertook in his quiet, resolute manner prospered and proved favorable to him.

John Dobson was no longer a very young man—he had probably attained his thirty-fifth year—he did not dance, he did not smoke, never played cards, did not drink, and never looked at a lady in a way that could enable her to cherish any hopes of his affection. He treated all women with the same courtesy, his conversation was always grave, and his remarks showed keen intelligence, marvellous quickness of observation, and, strangely enough, a great deal of imagination. But who among all the ladies of his acquaintance could boast of having talked with him for more than five minutes? Only Lizzie Castor; for her, in his formal manner, he conversed a long time in his low, quiet tones, and she listened with dilated, sparkling eyes; so far as her pride permitted she favored him. Dobson, in his peculiar way, singled her out among all other women, yet suddenly he no longer appeared at the entertainments given in the Castor mansion, and was never seen when Lizzie was present.

Something must have happened—it was rumored in society, and the gossips were right; something had happened.

One day Dobson called on Miss Castor at an

unusual hour, looked her steadily in the face, and then said:

"Miss Lizzie, you would be no woman if you did not know the state of my feelings. I think I have noticed that you take more interest in me than in the rest of the men who surround you. I offer you my hand, heart and fortune—can you decide to share my home?"

Lizzie's eyes flashed angrily. She did not accept his offered hand, but drawing back a step, while her face blanched, her eyes blazed with wrath, and her lips trembled, exclaimed:

"No—never, never!"

Dobson made no reply, only gazed at her in surprise, and his face turned somewhat paler than usual. Otherwise he was as calm and unmoved as ever.

Lizzie grew even whiter, her breath came in hurried gasps.

"I will become your wife ten thousand feet under the earth," she cried with a scornful laugh. "Yes, if we meet ten thousand feet under ground," she continued, trembling with rage, "repeat your offer, and I will then accept your hand, John Dobson."

A sudden flash of intelligence flitted over her companion's quiet features, and a smile, almost of amusement, hovered around his delicate lips an instant. But it was only for a second, then he was calm, grave and firm as ever.

"Are you in earnest, Miss Castor?" he asked courteously.

"Yes—ten thousand feet under the earth—I swear it!" answered Lizzie with an almost wild expression in her eyes, and quivering lips.

"I have your promise," replied John Dobson, and bowing low and respectfully he withdrew.

When he had gone, Lizzie rushed to her own room, threw herself on the bed and pressed her face against the pillows to stifle her passionate sobs; for she loved John wildly, ardently, madly, as only she could love, nay, loved him still. She had rejected him because his calmness and manly dignity angered her.

She had hoped to see him at her feet, like the rest of her admirers, and what she despised and hated in the latter, she longed for from this man with the whole strength of her proud, passionate heart. She would have thrown herself joyously into his arms, if he had only paid court to her a little, admired her, addressed a few flattering words to her, played the part of a lover, an adorer, even for a single hour; she would have given her life for one enthusiastic glance from his eyes, one kiss pressed upon her hand, one token that his calm, haughty, self-controlled nature was conquered by the magic of her charms. Only a tithe from him of the devotion lavished upon her by others—but she gained nothing. He had no eyes for the ardent longing that had consumed her heart for months.

Toward her fervent love—so Lizzie thought—he maintained his exasperating indifference, showing the security of a basilisk that has ensnared a little bird and intends to devour it at his leisure. She would not be this bird; he should find himself deceived in his infallible certainty, and when without any further preliminaries—according to Lizzie's idea—he came with his suit, the combustible materials of passion and wrath which had been so long accumulating in her heart, suddenly exploded in the way we have seen.

After this fateful morning Miss Castor looked still paler than usual, her mouth was more closely compressed, her bearing still more haughty and repellent, and from this time it was rumored in society that Miss Castor cherished a hopeless love for John Dobson, and this was the cause of her indifference and coldness toward all other men.

Mr. Castor would gladly have accepted John Dobson for his son-in-law, and told his daughter so after the catastrophe, of which he had heard no details from either party.

"Dobson no longer comes here," he began diplomatically. "You must have quarrelled."

"We have," replied Lizzie in an icy tone. "He is a noble, rich, honorable man, whom I should have preferred to all others for your husband," continued Mr. Castor with more feeling than he usually displayed.

"He has a mole on his left cheek," replied his daughter with apparent diffidence.

"It isn't the mole that separates you," said Mr. Castor gravely, fixing his keen, bright eyes on his daughter's face; "it's not like you to refuse such a man as Dobson for the sake of a mole; it is your vanity and arrogance that leads you to reject this noble fellow. You are making me very unhappy," added the clever, stubborn business man. "I am sorry for you as well as Dobson."

The father and daughter made no farther allusion to this subject; but Mr. Castor met the rejected suitor more frequently than before, though always outside of his own house, and Dobson lived on as quietly and apparently as well contented with the world and himself as before.

And Lizzie?

Whoever could have looked into her heart would have discovered, beneath her pride and coldness, a burning fire, constantly fanned by remorse and despair for having refused a man like Dobson, whose calm, manly resignation and faithfulness—for he paid attention to no one else—which she now began to fully understand, impressed her more and more deeply, excited higher esteem and inspired more ardent love.

Thus two years elapsed, during which time Dobson never approached Miss Castor, yet keen observers—of whom there are always some

in society—noticed that the man whom a half-forgotten rumor connected with the proud beauty still lingered near her, though at so great a distance, so cautiously, almost imperceptibly, that few remarked it; for others, who were also keen and skillful observers of New York fashionable life, strenuously denied it.

Suddenly Dobson sailed for the old world on a pleasure tour, and a few weeks after it was reported that Mr. Castor also intended to take a trip to Europe.

Rumor did not lie.

One day Mr. Castor told Lizzie his intentions.

"I'm going to have a summer trip to London, Paris, Naples, etc.," he began in a business-like tone. "I neither can nor wish to conceal from you," he added, "that Dobson is already on the other side, and has invited me to join him. I don't say I shall travel with him continually—but a meeting with him is inevitable, so I ask whether you wish to go with me."

Lizzie turned pale, then a sudden flush crimsoned her face—but without a moment's hesitation she answered:

"I'll go with you, papa! Europe is a large place, we shall not be always together, and I'm not afraid of meeting Mr. Dobson."

An expression of satisfaction, almost secret delight illumined Mr. Castor's stern, motionless face for an instant.

Lizzie did not notice it; she was gazing intently at the large white clouds in the sky, trying with all her power to control her excitement and still the passionate throbbing of her heart.

When she reached her room a deep sigh escaped her lips, a mournful expression came into her eyes, giving them a softer light; her resolute mouth quivered treacherously, and the proud beauty wept silent, burning tears.

"I love him now as much as I did two years ago," said a voice in her heart; "but I shall never be his wife—fool that I was! There is a vow between us, and never can I humble myself so far as to show him that I wish those arrogant words had never been uttered. He took them in earnest—these two years have showed me that he will keep me strictly to my oath; otherwise he would have tried to approach me again. There were plenty of opportunities. I have forfeited the happiness of my life by folly, vanity, caprice; but I shall see him again, perhaps speak to him, live near him—and even this seems joy, though it may be a very sorrowful one."

Thus remorse, grief and hope resigned whispered their lessons in the heart of the passionate girl.

Mr. Castor, with American promptness, carried his hasty resolution into immediate action, and three weeks after, with his daughter, joined Dobson in Paris. The men often met, and Lizzie saw her former lover.

The interview, however, was short; they strolled through the Louvre together. The gentleman was calm, courteous, friendly and passionless as ever, and Lizzie, whose heart was almost bursting with the conflict of contradictory emotions, against her will seemed still and unsympathizing.

Dobson left Paris, and travelled toward the south; Mr. Castor also soon found the metropolis of France did not possess sufficient interest to detain him longer, and he went to Switzerland.

In Lucerne Dobson and the Castors again met, and even chanced to live in the same hotel. Lizzie and Dobson sat side by side at dinner, and the former's heart swelled almost to bursting at the unvarying, immovable serenity of the man she loved. Mr. Dobson said that he intended to go to Milan the following day by the newly opened St. Gothard Railroad.

Mr. Castor remarked that he too intended to take the same trip to-morrow, they could probably travel together.

The other bowed politely, and said simply, without any token of excitement, that it would afford him great pleasure.

Lizzie sat silent, gazing upon her plate, scarcely able to repress her tears at the cheerful tone of her companion's words.

The next morning they took the steamer, changing to the railroad at Fiumen.

The train was very full, and the three travelling companions could not sit together. Dobson was obliged to find a place at the other end of the car, where he quietly seated himself and occupied his time with a guide-book.

The train constantly ascended higher and higher, over meadows, past cliffs and woods, by waterfalls, across bridges and viaducts; the huge colossal Mount St. Gothard, with its glaciers, drew nearer, Gothenen was gained.

Here the train stopped, the engine was changed, the lamp in the cars were lighted, there was a shrill whistle, the sound of various large and small electric bells and the train dashed into the gigantic wall of earth, which raising its peak crowned with eternal snows ten thousand feet toward the clouds, divides Italy from German soil. The passengers were greatly excited, the temperature in the cars rose, and the lamps, which at first burned clearly and brightly, now sent forth a reddish light, that gave the interior of the carriage a solemn, almost gloomy character.

The transit through the tunnel was to last forty minutes. Twenty had already passed amid the expectant silence of the passengers, and still the steam-horse rushed on, and the wheels of the cars made a hollow roar.

Just at that moment a singular incident occurred.

A gentleman, who had hitherto remained quietly in his seat, rose and walked through the car to the place where Mr. Castor sat, with his daughter, closely veiled, by his side.

It was Mr. Dobson.

Drawing himself up to his full height he stationed himself before Lizzie, saying:

"Miss Castor, we are ten thousand feet under the earth. I remind you of your promise. I offer you my hand, heart and fortune—will you become my wife?"

A strange pause followed; the cars rumbled on; the red light of the torches outside flickered through the windows and shone on the man's tall figure. He had spoken in English; there were English people in the train and the other passengers must also have understood him, for all had now risen from their seats and were gazing in amazement at the eccentric foreigner and the young lady to whom his words were addressed. Every one listened breathlessly for what was to come next.

They did not hear much, the scene ended as quickly as it had begun.

The young lady hurriedly rose from her seat, threw her arms around the man standing before her, and whispered in a trembling voice:

"Yes, a thousand—ten thousand times yes!"

Suddenly a long, shrill whistle sounded, daylight began to appear; the strange incident was forgotten, for all the passengers rushed to the windows to see the exit from the giant tunnel.

The train stopped, and ere the curious travellers could remember the adventure they had witnessed and look for the actors in this original drama the latter had hastily quitted the cars, leaving their seats empty. The last flutter of the young lady's blue veil could be seen vanishing behind the Alpego di San Gotardo.

The train roared on, pressing farther into Italy, with its cypress and olive trees.

Mr. Castor, his daughter and Mr. Dobson took a short walk together. Lizzie was a little in advance, leaning on Dobson's arm, while Mr. Castor seemed to be intently examining the various kinds of stone.

"And you thought of it the whole two years?" Lizzie asked, joyously.

"From the moment you mentioned the ten thousand feet under the earth I fixed my hopes upon this moment and longingly anticipated the opening of the railway line."

"You relied so implicitly upon my promise?" Lizzie continued.

"I knew your character, and relied upon your promise because I firmly believed you had rejected me solely from pride and caprice, on account of my approaching somewhat abruptly. That might have offended you, I considered, but as I saw and felt that you loved me, it seemed impossible that you could remain angry forever, and the two years during which you rejected all suitors strengthened my belief, my confidence."

"So you left me in my grief, and watched two years, for this moment?" said Lizzie, pouting like any other loving girl.

"Not watched, but waited," replied Dobson. "I thought that if I approached you a second time, you would again reject me, and then I should have remained all my life a lonely man. I had your promise, and could hold you to your word, for I knew your pride would not allow you to break it again. The instant you made the jeering speech about the ten thousand feet under the earth, the idea that this would be the very way to win you from yourself arose in my mind."

"You are a terrible man," said Lizzie, casting an ardent glance at the tall figure striding along by her side.

"Not more terrible than you. For two years you did not even let an eye-lash quiver, and looked away whenever you saw me; so I quietly waited and let you pout. During this time you learned to know your heart and I made a million dollars, so we can live without business wherever you choose; if you prefer, out of gratitude to Father Gothard, our second father-in-law, even here in Airola," Dobson concluded, with a touch of the sarcastic humor peculiar to him.

"Well, we'll first continue our journey to Milan," said Mr. Castor, who had overtaken the pair and heard the last words. "I shouldn't care to spend the whole summer taking sentimental walks with you—that is, examining strata of stones," he added gayly.

"Of course, papa," replied the happy pair, laughing.

"Besides," Lizzie now gravely observed, "you know that three of the ten thousand feet are lacking. Gothenen and the tunnel, I remember having read in the guide-book are three thousand feet in my favor, and if you don't behave well, I can make it a ground for divorce."

"Oh! your calculations won't do," answered Dobson, laughing; "I knew the three thousand feet were lacking, but the bargain is concluded and we are quits."

The American colony in Rome, where the three travellers arrived a few weeks later, were not a little surprised at the almost simultaneous arrival of the two "unhappy" lovers about whom so many rumors had been in circulation, and the announcement of their engagement in the *Herald*.

All that I heard of it I have here told my readers.

A LIGHTNING express is projected between Paris and St. Petersburg, via Berlin.